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Articles:

Wittgenstein and Cultural Studies
Henry McDonald

Post-Shoah Political Theology
Aryeh Botwinick

Special Section on:

European Responses to September 11

Russell A. Berman: Responses to Sept. 11
Luciano Pellicani: Islam and the West
Alain de Benoist: The 20th Century Ended Sept. 11
Jean Baudrillard: The Spirit of Terrorism
Alain Minc: Terrorism of the Spirit
Marco Tarchi: War as a Tool of Cultural Hegemony
John Milbank: Sovereignty, Capital and Terror
Gary Ulmen: The Military Significance of Sept. 11

Review:

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Introduction

Few events are significant enough to mark a historical divide, and when they occur, it usually takes a while to realize their implications. The Sept. 11 attack is one such event, whose full impact so far has been experienced mostly as a spectacle, and whose meaning remains unclear. This is why this issue includes another section dealing with typical responses, now mostly from Europeans. There are lessons to be learned, but as yet it is not obvious what they are — and whatever may have been learned so far has already been mainstreamed into pre-Sept. 11 conventional wisdom. Thus, the attack has already been reformatted in terms of traditional political categories. The enemy has been identified primarily with a particular regime; the US has taken the opportunity to expand its scope and centralize ever more power; and the drift of international relations, already in the process of being redefined on the basis of American unilateralism and high-tech military capabilities, has been greatly accelerated. As a result, as can be seen in most of the European responses, traditional anti-Americanism is still a convenient scapegoat, so much so that Jean Baudrillard practically welcomes the Sept. 11 terrorism as a kind of "natural" reaction to repressive collective desires to destroy by any means a power so great and irrational that it cannot be confronted in any other way.

One of the most obvious lessons that should have been learned after Sept. 11 is that Western universalism, which proved to be so effective as an ideological weapon during the Cold War, first to delegitimate "the Evil Empire," and then to facilitate the spread of American cultural hegemony, is utterly bankrupt. Now, even more than after the Iranian revolution, when it first became obvious, it is no longer possible to fantasize that what Hollywood depicts as an idealized US can be cloned all over the world. Whether Muslim fundamentalists are true representatives of Islam or not, it is obvious that Islamic particularity cannot be subsumed under any "new and improved" version of that secularized Protestantism so successfully marketed (with military support) since the days of Woodrow

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Wilson: hereafter, Islamic particularity will have to be treated as "a radical other," through specific and rigorously enforced contractual arrangements — even if this norm is itself a particular Western idiosyncrasy. The United Nation's objectification of this fundamentalist universalism — the establishment of an international organization operating within a uniform legal framework predicated on human rights, the primacy of abstract individualism, and a rigorous separation of the secular and the religious — is about to go the way of the League of Nations. Even the US, which has benefited the most from these supposedly "neutral" international arrangements, has made it abundantly clear that, when the chips are down, it will do what it has to, with or without international support.

The bottom line is that Islamic fundamentalists have forced the belated birth of a post-communist world order and have demonstrated that 20th century geopolitical arrangements are hopelessly obsolete: the politics of power blocs has finally disintegrated into post-national identity politics predicated on inherited belief systems and cultural rootedness. As Alain de Benoist indicates, this means the end of megastates and arbitrarily homogenized populations, and the resurgence of strong organic communities whose cultural autonomy necessitates a difficult blend of loose political ties and strong economic relations.

The real lesson that seems to have been learned by the Bush Administration, however, is that it is time to translate the old "arrogance of power" into a settlement of scores with all the various tin-horn dictatorships that have fought the US into military stalemates since WWII: North Korea, Somalia, Iraq, Iran, etc. The Bush Administration's *Realpolitik* does not actually introduce too many new rules, but reinforces the old ones, predicated, first and foremost, on guaranteeing the openness of international markets, and the further marginalization of all extra-economic concerns — although human rights ideology is still deployed whenever convenient, as in the case of the plight of Afghan women, suddenly discovered to be unbearably "oppressed." Yet, the Bush Administration also seeks to defend and strengthen the megastate, while subsuming all otherness within a new *complexio oppositorum* no longer based on religion, but on fundamental American values still marketed as universally valid. "Terrorism," always a slippery concept at best, is now operationally redefined not just as the extra-military deployment of violence to achieve political objectives, but includes also "the axis of evil" — anyone who interferes with American interests by violating market rules or seeking to impose by force an alternative "universality" predicated on radically different axiological principles.

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In practice, all of this translates not only into an uncritical retention, but an actual enhancement of 20th century political shibboleths of national sovereignty, the sanctity of "representative democracy," the centralization of power, increased security concerns, bureaucratization of everyday life, etc. Ideas and institutions remain ever more removed from the new political, economic, and cultural realities, while neoliberalism remains predominant by default. This means that any real solutions to the terrorist threat — the kind of community spirit and public vigilance already displayed in the passengers' revolt in the fourth hijacked plane and in the apprehension of the shoe-bomber — are sacrificed in favor of impractical measures enforced by the same inefficient state apparatus that, despite all the resources devoted to pre-Sept. 11 "intelligence," had no hint of what was coming. In the midst of all this, except for new security measures at airports designed to stop yesterday's terrorist operations that no terrorist in his right mind would ever think of replicating today, life seems to go on as before. Nothing will ever be the same, but the real impact has yet to be felt.

This paradoxical state of affairs, which seems to have drastically altered power relations between a resurgent US and an increasingly rudderless Europe, does not seem to have registered on most European intellectuals, who, by and large, use Sept. 11 as an opportunity to perpetuate and extend standard anti-American criticisms and misunderstandings. Embroiled even more than the US in social-democratic swamps of bureaucratization, centralization and corruption, Europeans are now looking for sands in which to bury their heads, while blaming Sept. 11 on US foreign policy blunders, as if foreign policy were a sub-discipline of ethics and there really were countries which practiced a version of it less opportunistic, self-serving, contradictory, and, consequently, often counterproductive. Thus, along with practically all other European intellectuals, after reconstructing a whole series of alleged conspiracies by the American ruling class, Benoist identifies the real motives behind the American "war on terrorism": to secure oil and new markets for capitalism.

This charge is as widespread as it is misleading and meaningless. It smells of theft or blackmail — as if the US was out to steal a vital resource that, e.g., the Arabs, bereft of the Western technology they would no longer be able to afford without oil revenues, could productively use otherwise to run their camels faster. The US, and even more Western Europe and East Asia need the oil to run their economies. But, all they want is to be able to purchase it, like any other commodity, at *competitive* market

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prices. The main US foreign policy objective has been, and remains, the prevention of economic blackmail by greedy sheiks, ruthless dictators *à la* Saddam Hussein, and Latin American demagogues such as Hugo Chavez from setting artificially inflated monopoly prices. What is at stake is more than having to trade in the Peugeot or the Mercedes for an old Deux Chevaux, but of disrupting not just the US economy but, *ipso facto*, the world economy in general. Thus, the US is blamed not only for adopting policies that any country in its current geopolitical position would have adopted, but for going as far as to unleash a major war to accomplish it. Sept. 11 turns out to be only a convenient pretext for carrying out what would have been an otherwise extremely unpopular policy.

In making the case for the diabolical nature of US policies, even the most normal practice is tainted with criminal intent. The US is condemned for first supporting members of Al Qaeda and the Mujaheddin against the Soviets, and then turning against the Taliban. But, in history very often the enemies of today become the friends of tomorrow and vice-versa — and European history is perhaps the best example of this: after 1941, the Soviet Union became an ally of the US against Nazi Germany, which had signed a non-aggression pact with the Soviets in 1939. Presumably the US should not have used whatever means it took — including any bandits, thieves and drug-traders who may have thrived within the Afghan opposition — to precipitate the collapse of the USSR. When all is said and done, this misplaced pseudo-moralism turns out to be but a recycled version of the old "better red than dead" mode of appeasement.

As a rule, in most of the European responses, the perfunctory acknowledgement of the outrageous nature of the Sept. 11 attack is followed by yet another indictment of a notoriously bungling, incompetent, and often contradictory American foreign policy, as if to insinuate that, somehow or other, the US had it coming. Elaborate reconstructions of the history of American foreign policy documenting its embroilment with securing the availability of the world's oil supply and other vital resources are immediately followed by the usual charges of greed and standard indictments of capitalism — first and foremost *American* capitalism — as the *fons et origo malorum*. Worse yet, this capitalism is not seen merely as an economic system, but as an ideology and, to the extent that American capitalism is predominant, a paradigmatically *American* ideology. Thus, the US is still blamed for practically all of the world's problems, which allegedly are only *American* problems, and should not be exported to any of the other capitalist countries (especially Europe) which follow exactly the same logic and share the same fate.

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What remains unmentioned is that, since the Cold War, Europeans have embroiled the US in fighting their battles. On the one hand, they have meagerly supported their defense budgets; on the other, they have continued to bolster their bloated welfare states. A good example is the wars in the former Yugoslavia. This was a *European* problem and Europeans should have solved it. Europeans then did nothing for almost two years, despite the most horrendous crimes since the Holocaust, and then agreed to act only if the Americans not only participated, but took charge of the operation. The Europeans criticized the American bombing policy that ended the conflict. Then, after the dust had settled and the US tried to withdraw to let Europeans handle the peace-keeping, Germany, France, and Italy stated that if the Americans withdrew, they would do likewise.

Thus, it is absurd for Marco Tarchi to try to draw a distinction between "Western," "European," and "American" cultures in order to disassociate Europeans from having to deal with the consequences of Sept. 11, which is seen as a purely American problem. Presumably, what precipitated the attacks was resentment against American support for Israel and insensitivity for the plight of Palestinians. While US Middle East policy has not been exceptionally brilliant, and a lot more could have been done to rein in Jewish fundamentalists and the settlers, while persuading many of the more aggressive leaders on both side to accept the only kind of settlement possible, i.e., two strong states with clearly defined borders and at peace with each other, this is by no means the whole story. Forgotten in all this is that Israel was the result of the Holocaust — an exclusively European, or, rather, German problem for which the rest of the world has been trying to make amends for over half a century; that the Palestinians are split into numerous factions, from moderates calling for some viable *modus vivendi*, to extremists still seeking the annihilation of Israel, thus precluding the possibility of any viable agreement acceptable to all; and that the Palestinians have not been a major focus of Bin Laden's pompous pronouncements on American theodicy.

Having translated this European problem into an American one, Tarchi wants to disassociate himself entirely from "Western culture" understood as American ideology. But, the freedom of speech, pluralism, and respect for the individual that he presents as paradigmatically "European" alternatives to Western and American "one-dimensional thought," are not only among the most fundamental values of the American Constitution, but altogether lacking in European Jacobin traditions — not to mention the various, now defunct, fascist, communist and Nazi regimes of 20th

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century Europe that the US spent so many lives and resources to eradicate. At any rate, it remains the case that, while the exercise of some particularly offensive speech (such as questioning the occurrence of the Holocaust or publishing *Mein Kampf*) may result in some heated debates in the US, it still leads to stiff prison sentences in most of Europe. True, in the US not all free speech becomes the subject of public debate, and the media, entirely privately owned, picks and chooses what it wants to discuss, often excluding unpopular or dissenting opinions. Yet, the right to free speech also entails the right not to listen — and the privately owned media, responding to the dictates of "democratic" choices articulated through the market, makes those choices. While by no means an ideal system, often subject to manipulation by powerful economic interests, it is certainly better than any existing state-run alternatives.

Something similar can also be found in John Milbank's account, which starts out with an utterly unrealistic picture of the US. On the one hand, the US is depicted as a monolithic behemoth dominating the world both economically and culturally; on the other, American and capitalist hegemony is characterized as surprisingly fragile. In fact, the Us is seen as such an increasingly unstable polity that potential conflicts may break out between the country's liberal coasts and conservative center. In view of the fact that President Bush has managed to achieve the highest approval rating in history, that patriotism in the US is at an all-time high, and that, shortly after Sept. 11, all American flags were sold out, Millbank's account reads like pure fiction. The same goes for his evaluation of the rest of the world where, allegedly, communism in the East and anti-capitalism in Western Europe are reasserting themselves, and, under the banner of anti-globalization, resistance movements are rising in the South. In reality, however, communism is as dead as a doornail practically everywhere in the world (even in China), anti-capitalist movements are unable to provide any alternative other than long-since discredited versions of statism, and most of the South is torn by civil wars, corruption, and general disintegration. Relying on Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri's *Empire* — a particularly wooden text replete with Marxist dogma such as "the proletariat,' "class struggle" and "capitalist exploitation" etc., by an ex-terrorist and a "literary critic," Milbank presents the US as not only imperialist, but Machiavellian and even totalitarian, and recommends that the North withdraw from its unqualifiedly capitalist commitments, presumably in favor of Christian socialism.

While not appealing to the traditionally ridiculous "law of the falling

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rate of profits," along with every Marxist since Frederick Engels, Milbank envisions "twin crises of Western sovereignty and Western capitalism" (unlike Marx, who in *Capital* demonstrates nothing of the kind). According to Milbank, the US might already have been planning to go to war as an opportunity to rescue state sovereignty and to protect its world markets. Thus, his bizarre arguments all but justify the attacks on the Twin Towers, which he sees as a windfall for the US. Misreading Carl Schmitt, he claims that the "the occasional emergency of war" is crucial for state legitimacy. For Schmitt, however, war is neither an emergency nor is it crucial for state legitimacy. Milbank also makes no distinction between war and terrorism, and sees no difference between the post-Sept. 11 predicament and what went on in the last century, since for him all war is state terrorism. He goes on to compare Bush with Hitler, and to foresee a kind of American Third Reich developing from a state of perpetual emergency.

All of this follows from Milbank's idiosyncratic reading of the relation between Islam and the West, which is allegedly predicated on a theological and metaphysical legacy common to Christianity, Judaism, and Islam. While this politically-correct position that we are all metaphysical brothers under the skin is intended to discredit the US government's military actions after Sept. 11, it misses the point. As Luciano Pellicani demonstrates, Western cultural aggression has plunged the Islamic world into a state of permanent crisis. Not only has Islam not managed to adapt to modernity, but it remains implacably opposed to it. For Milbank, the situation is the opposite, i.e., revived Islamic civilization is said to be in some ways a challenge to the Western secular state, even though it is a rival twin. Accordingly, the conventional view that in the 13th century the West became more secular, while Islam remained theocratic, is only a "half-truth." This, however, makes it difficult to explain why today the West is secularized, whereas most Islamic societies still exhibit a 13th century mentality.

Milbank chooses to ignore the most obvious exception to his argument, i.e, Turkey. Kemal Ataturk managed to bring modernity to his country not by talking in religious platitudes or by attempting to convince Islamic clerics and fundamentalists of the benefits of collaborating with Europe, but by incarcerating or liquidating all who were opposed to secularization. Today, the secular Turkish army stands guard against any attempt to turn Turkey into an Islamic state. To Islamic fundamentalists, all secular individuals are infidels, and no amount of metaphysical bonding or religious socialism is going to bridge this gap. Islamic fundamentalists consider the US "the Great Satan," because it is the leading modern

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culture. Thus, the claim Milbank shares with Tarchi that this "war against terrorism" is only an American concern is foolish and dangerous. Unless all Europeans plan to convert to Islam in the next few years, they will be as much at risk as Americans. Islamic fundamentalism is not a passing fad, but a problem that will likely define the first half of the 21st century.

Seemingly unrelated articles in this issue, by Henry McDonald and Aryeh Botwinick, drive home similar points: the irreducibility of cultural particularity to practically infinite options within a relativistic universe, in which personal identity is a matter of arbitrary choice; and, following Emmanuel Levinas, the need to keep deeply-rooted cultural traditions open to what Botwinick calls "horizontal transcendence" and skepticism in order to ensure respect for others without compromising either oneself or others. In relation not only to Islamic, but also to Christian, Jewish, and any other fundamentalism — including Enlightenment fundamentalism — these arguments rule out any kind of international political correctness forcing particular norms hypostatized as universally valid on all "others" whose traditions do not recognize them as such (e.g., neoliberal attempts to shove "human rights" down China's throat), while vindicating the need to be aware of the inherent limitations of one's own culture and keeping open the possibility of learning from all others. After reconstructing the trajectory of an esoteric debate between John Searle and Jacques Derrida concerning literary criticism in general and narrative in particular, McDonald articulates in detail Ludwig Wittgenstein's views later in life, which challenge the kind of opportunistic relativism predominant in increasingly fashionable disciplines such as "Cultural Studies." Nothing exemplifies this Wittgensteinian position better than Botwinick's reading of Orthodox Judaism through the lenses of a negative theology, whose ultimate impact is to vindicate both cultural rootedness and the human limitations necessitating its constant self-transcendence.

Paul Piccone and Gary Ulmen

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Wittgenstein, Narrative Theory, and Cultural Studies

Henry McDonald

Who won the 1977 debate between John Searle and Jacques Derrida that ensued after the English publication of Derrida's critique of J. L. Austin (Searle's mentor)?[1] If the subsequent decline of speech act theory in literary studies is an indication, then the winner was undoubtedly Derrida.[2] His "victory," however, was less over Austin's and Searle's views than a deflation of critics' expectations concerning their work as a tool for literary interpretation. Searle has often complained that Derrida never really "confronted" Austin's arguments; and, clearly, Derrida did not formulate his objections in analytic-philosophical terms.[3] But he did not need to, beyond showing that speech act theory could not do what it claimed: to link literary criticism to cultural and historical studies.[4] At stake was literature as a mode of cultural discourse. New Critics and other formalists had claimed that literary texts could be treated as autonomous entities whose meaning was independent of

1. For Derrida's critique of Austin, see his "Signature Event Context," in *Glyph*, Vol. 1 (1977). Searle responds in "Reiterating the Differences: A Reply to Derrida," in *ibid.*, pp. 198-208. For Derrida's reply, see "Limited Inc a b c . . ." in *Limited Inc* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press), pp. 29-110. See also *New Literary History*, Vol. 25, No. 3 (1994).

2. See Jacqueline Henkel, "Speech-Act Theory Revisited: Rule Notions and Reader-Oriented Criticism, in *Poetics Today* 17 (1988), pp. 505-530; and Mary Louise Pratt, "Ideology and Speech-Act Theory," in *Poetics Today* 7 (1986), pp. 59-72.

3. Searle, "Reiterating the Difference. . . ," *op. cit.*

4. See Roger Fowler, ed., *Style and Structure in Literature Style: Essays in the New Stylistics* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1975); and Stanley Fish, *Is There a Text in This Class? The Authority of Interpretive Communities* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1980). Richard Rorty's *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979), and *Consequences of Pragmatism* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1982) have been successful in part because of their linking of literary and cultural studies.

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the author's intentions and the readers' responses.[5] That claim rested on a sharp distinction between literary and ordinary language; the autonomy of literary texts could be maintained only by granting special status to literary discourse. By contrast, speech act theory's contention that even factual statements were "performative" undercut any such distinctions.[6] By viewing language as action whose meaning depends on the social context, speech act theory promised a new approach to language that made meaning a function of what Austin called "the total situation in which the utterance is issued."[7]

One of the possible applications of this understanding of language as action was in the study of fiction. The New Critics' intentionalist fallacy had been epistemological; its purpose was not just to separate the roles of narrator and author, but to shift control of the "meaning" of the text from a person (the author) to an anthropomorphic *persona* within the text whose functions could be formalized (the narrator).[8] The distinction between author and narrator came to be understood as obtaining between a person who can only *imagine* what characters do, think, and feel, and a *persona* within the text who knows.[9] The status of fiction as a "suspended" discourse[10] is thus closely linked to the modern concept of the narrator as an anthropomorphic presence who, "within the universe of fictional discourse," is all-knowing. Applied to fiction, speech act theory seemed to question the narrator's privileged position by "opening" textual meaning to social and historical forces. If language was a form of action, and not simply a medium for the conveyance of meaning, did not narrative, in addition to transmitting content, also perform a culturally and historically embedded "narrative act"? Did not

5. W. K. Wimsatt's *The Verbal Icon: Studies in the Meaning of Poetry* (Lexington, KY: University of Kentucky Press, 1954), especially pp. 3-20 and 21-40.

6. The term "performative" was coined by Austin; in the second half of his *How to Do Things With Words*, ed. by J. O. Urmson and Marina Sbisa (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1962), it is displaced by another term he also coined, "illocutionary," just as the earlier "constative" is displaced by "locutionary." Searle adopts the term, "illocutionary" and, except in *Expression and Meaning: Studies in the Theory of Speech Acts* (New York: Cambridge United Press, 1979), uses "performative" infrequently.

7. J. L. Austin, *How To Do Things With Words*, *op. cit.*, p. 52.

8. See Ann Banfield, *Unspeakable Sentences: Narration and Representation in the Language of Fiction* (Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1982), pp. 183-85.

9. Gérard Genette, *Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method*, tr. by Jane E. Lewin (Ithaca: Cornell University Press), p. 214.

10. Thus, it is misleading to focus, with Barthes and Foucault, on the author's essentialist features. Such a focus does not threaten, but reinforces the formalist basis of narrative theory's account of narrative agency. See Michel Foucault, "The Death of the Author," in Robert Con Davis and Ronald Schleifer, eds., *Contemporary Literary Criticism* (New York: Longman, 1994), pp. 341-353, and Roland Barthes, "What is an Author?" in *Image Music Text*, tr. by Stephen Heath (New York: The Noonday Press, 1977), pp. 142-148.

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such a narrative act constitute a discursive event enacted by a person at a particular time and place, so that the circumstances of the narrative's production were essential for understanding the text? For a time, speech act theory promised to deformalize and historicize narrative theory.[11]

Enter the Searle-Derrida debate, which ended with Derrida's contemptuous rebuttal to Searle.[12] Derrida had succeeded in drawing attention to some of speech act theory's disturbing implications for literary critics. Chief among those was an uncritical concept of context, according to which the circumstances in which language acts take place are "fully formalizable" as rules rooted in what Searle calls "a ground floor property of the mind," or "intentionality."[13] Drawing on Gottlob Frege's account of language[14] as

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11. See Ross Chambers, *Story and Situation: Narrative Seduction and the Power of Fiction* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984), and *Room For Maneuver: Reading Oppositional Narrative* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1991); Mary Louise Pratt, *Toward a Speech-Act Theory of Literary Discourse* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1977), and "Ideology and Speech-Act Theory" in *Poetics Today* 7 (1986), pp. 59-72; as well as Sandy Petrey, *Speech Acts and Literary Theory* (New York: Routledge, 1990); Stephen Mailloux, *Rhetorical Power* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989); Stanley Fish, *Is There a Text in this Class? op. cit.*; Martha Woodmansee, "Speech Act Theory and the Perpetuation of the Dogma of Literary Autonomy," in *Centrum* 6 (1978); Chris Hutchison, "The Act of Narration," in *Journal of Literary Semantics* 13 (1984), pp. 3-34; and Thomas Pavel, "Ontological Issues in Poetics: Speech Acts and Fictional Worlds," in *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 40 (1981), pp. 167-78.

12. On the history of speech act theory and its relation to the Searle-Derrida debate, see Jacqueline Henkel, "Speech-Act Theory Revisited: Rule Notions and Reader-Oriented Criticism," in *Poetics Today* 17 (1988), pp. 505-530; Jonathan Culler, "Defining Narrative Units," in Roger Fowler, ed., *Style and Structure in Literature: Essays in the New Stylistics* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1975), pp. 123-142; Shoshana Felman, *The Literary Speech Act*, tr. by Catherine Porter (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1983); Barbara Johnson, *The Critical Difference: Essays in the Contemporary Rhetoric of Reading* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980); Gayatri Spivak, "Revolutions That as Yet Have No Model: Derrida's *Limited Inc*," in *Diacritics* 10 (1980), pp. 29-49; and Samuel Weber "It," in *Glyph* 4 (1978), pp. 1-31.

13. John Searle, *Intentionality: An Essay in the Philosophy of Mind* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983), p. 26.

14. Gottlob Frege, *The Foundations of Arithmetic: A Logico-Mathematic Enquiry into the Concept of Number*, tr. by J. L.Austin (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1974); Michael Dummett, "Frege, Gottlob," in *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Vol. 3, ed. by Paul Edwards (London: Collier Macmillan, 1967), pp. 225-37. Austin's and Searle's exclusion of "perlocutionary" consequences from illocutionary acts, as well as their related attacks on the Wittgensteinian notion of "meaning as use," reflect a marginalization of context in accounting for meaning that follows Fregean lines. See Austin, *How to Do Things with Words*, *op. cit.*, pp. 100 and 30; John Searle, "Literary Theory and Its Discontents," in *New Literary History* 25 (1994), p. 650; *Speech Acts: An Essay in the Philosophy of Language* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1969), p. 37; *Expression and Meaning: Studies in the Theory of Speech Acts* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1979), pp. 58-75.

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rule-governed, i.e., his notions of "sense," "reference," and "force," speech act theory equates "context" with rule-governed, intentionally grounded conventions. According to this account, what distinguishes literary conventions is that they are insufficiently rule-governed; their performative "force" is make-believe, distinct from that found in "ordinary language." Speech act theory thus imposes a distinction between ordinary and fictional language, which is more restrictive than the New Critics' distinction between poetic and referential language. While New Critics, influenced by Coleridgean idealism, distinguished poetic from referential discourse in order to privilege the former, speech act theorists subordinate literary language by viewing it as "parasitic" on more "normal" forms of discourse.[15] Indeed, if understanding language is a matter of understanding its "rules," then literary language, which has traditionally taken pride in its ability to violate such rules, becomes marginalized as not fully engaged with "reality."

From this perspective, and keeping in mind the background of the Searle-Derrida debate, Searle had no real chance of winning. Yet, Derrida's success must be distinguished from the acceptance of his alternative: the "iterability" of language, whereby meaning is the product of repetitive acts never strictly rule-governed. On the contrary, they are internally divided against themselves, because the potential range of contexts[16] in which those acts may be repeated, and hence altered in meaning, is "boundless." The picture conjured here is that of language acts wandering through an infinite series of discursive frameworks.[17] Such a picture conveys little in the way in which context helps to produce meaning, but lends itself to a formalistic, if highly flexible method of textual interpretation in which the main role of context is to exhibit the self-divided,

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15. Austin, *How to Do Things with Words*, *op. cit.*, pp. 22, 104; Searle, *Speech Acts*, *ibid.*, p. 78. For a challenge to such subordination, see Mary Louise Pratt, *Toward a Speech Act Theory of Literary Discourse*, *op. cit.*, and "Ideology and Speech-Act Theory," *op. cit.*, pp. 59-72.

16. Derrida's concept of context falls into the latter category. See his *Margins of Philosophy*, tr. by Alan Bass (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1982), pp. 309-330; *Speech and Phenomena*, tr. by David B. Allison (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1973), pp. 52-68; and *Limited Inc*, *op. cit.*, pp. 48, 53, 62-3, 65, 92, 98, 119 and 129. See also Rodophe Gasche, *The Tain of the Mirror: Derrida and the Philosophy of Reflection* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1986), pp. 212-217; and *Inventions of Difference: On Jacques Derrida* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1994), pp. 39-40; Timothy Clark, *Derrida, Heidegger, Blanchot: Sources of Derrida's Notion and Practice of Literature* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992), p. 168; and Henry Staten, *Wittgenstein and Derrida* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1984), pp. 22-3.

17. See Mailloux, *op. cit.*, pp. 11-12.

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semantically undecidable nature of language.[18] It is difficult to see how such a view of language could not but discourage efforts to historicize literary studies. Although Derridean poststructuralism emphasizes the "excess" of meaning generated by language — as found, e.g., in the notions of "supplement," "margin," "remainder," etc. — such excess is less a "doing" embedded in discursive and non-discursive conventions than a non-doing upholding the universality of the law of non-contradiction while systematically violating it.[19] Although, according to Derrida, language always "differs" from itself, it always does so in the same way, i.e., independently of the particular features of the contexts in which it is performed. This makes meaning necessarily indeterminate, and therefore, in a rather odd, not to mention unhistorical sense, predictable.

To understand what informs this view of language, it should be recalled that, as Derrida has often pointed out, poststructuralist theory is rooted in Heideggerian "fundamental ontology," which in *Being and Time* is synonymous with "the destruction of classical ontology."[20] Fundamental ontology claims to call into question the anthropomorphic basis of the concepts of time and history — to "temporalize time" and "historicize history" — by investing in the ontological significance of language. But as critics such as Theodor Adorno, Jean-François Lyotard, and Pierre Bourdieu have argued, Heidegger's ontologization of language substitutes for faith in science and epistemology a "faith in Being," which ignores Kant's strictures on the limits of thought.[21] In Adorno's words, Heideggerian

18. Derrida's attack on the determinacy of context focuses not on the variability of meanings that obtain from different kinds of language practices, but on what is invariable: on the "condition of possibility," which is also a "law," of such varying meanings. See his *Margins of Philosophy*, *op. cit.*, pp. 324-325 and Gasche's *Tain*, *op. cit.*, p. 216.

19. Derrida, *Speech and Phenomena*, *op.cit.* p. 88; and *Writing and Difference*, tr. by Alan Bass (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1978), p. 91.

20. The term "ontology" was coined in the 17th century and developed by such thinkers as Christian Wolff and Alexander Baumgarten, who understood it to be a deductive body of necessary truths. This was attacked by Kant in *Critique of Pure Reason*. By the time he wrote his *Introduction to Metaphysics*, tr. by Ralph Manheim (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1961), Heidegger proposed to abandon the term "ontology" altogether. See Alasdair MacIntyre, "Ontology," in *Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, *op. cit.*, Vol. 5 (1978), pp. 542-543; George Romanos, *Quine and Analytic Philosophy* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1983), pp. 49-62; Hubert Dreyfus, *Being-in-the-World: A Commentary on Heidegger's Being and Time* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1991), pp. 121-127.

21. Theodor W. Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, tr. by E. B. Ashton (New York: Continuum, 1996), pp. 61-128; Pierre Bourdieu, *The Political Ontology of Martin Heidegger* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1991), pp. 35, 41, 56-61 and 65-67; and Jean-François Lyotard, *Heidegger and "the Jews,"* tr. by Andreas Michel and Mark S. Roberts (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988), pp. 31-32, 38 and 85-87.

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philosophy becomes "a second reprise of the old philosophies of the Absolute, their first reprise having been post-Kantian idealism."[22] Derridean poststructuralism, if not a third reprise, is still haunted by the ghost of such an Absolute. For if language "does" nothing in the sense that its meaning is self-cancelling, it is this non-doing which, according to Heidegger, is revelatory of the non-presence of Being.[23]

Such mystification of language accounts not just for the uneasiness between poststructuralist theory and cultural studies, but for the moral numbness — what Lyotard calls "the deconstructive anamnesis, the blind blank zone" — exhibited by Derrida in his "deconstructions" of Man's and Heidegger's affiliations with Nazism.[24] That numbness is striking when contrasted with the intensity of moral feeling that pervades Nietzsche's writings, which are generally acknowledged to be one of the major sources of poststructuralist theory. In his original critique of speech act theory, Derrida praises Austin's notion of performative language as "beckoning" toward "Nietzschean thought"; the allusion, which is made in a characteristically Heideggerian idiom, is apparently to Nietzsche's notion of "the will to power." Here, Derrida takes for granted Heidegger's reading of Nietzsche.[25] As has often been argued, however, this reading of Nietzsche deflects attention

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22. Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, *op. cit.*, p. 62.

23. As Timothy Clark puts it, "Derrida valorizes language, not as a play of diacritical marks, but as the site of something totally *other*, by which is meant something analogous to the annunciation or 'arrival' of being itself." See Timothy Clark, *Derrida, Heidegger, Blanchot*, *op. cit.*, p. 9.

24. In *Heidegger and "the Jews,"* Lyotard attributes Derrida's silence on "the question (that Adorno) called 'Auschwitz'" to "deconstruction": on "this lack, which Derrida cannot address in any way, nor can he identify it, at least as long as he holds on to deconstruction" (p. 76). Deconstruction, Lyotard continues, "authorizes a politics that existentialist-ontological thought only permitted" (p. 73).

25. Derrida, *Margins*, *op. cit.*, p. 322; see also Martin Heidegger, *Nietzsche*, in four volumes. See Vol. 1, tr. by David Farrell Krell (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1987), pp. 18-24; and *Nietzsche* Vol. 3, pp. 161-183. In *Of Grammatology*, tr. by Gayatri Spivak (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976), Derrida deals with Heidegger's reading of Nietzsche by first identifying and presumably condemning "a reading [of Nietzsche] of the Heideggerian type" (p. 19), which would portray Nietzsche as a "naive ontologist"; and then claiming that, far from needing to "save" Nietzsche from such a reading, "we should perhaps offer him up to it completely, underwriting that interpretation [Heidegger's] without reserve" (p. 19). Apparently, Derrida is being ironic here, but there is nothing ironic in the parenthetical comment that follows, in which Heidegger's "conclusions" about Nietzsche being trapped within the very metaphysics he was criticizing (trapped, because he lacked the key of fundamental ontology) are not only affirmed, but declared "irrefutable." Derrida qualifies this by insisting that one arrives at it only in a properly deconstructive manner, i.e., after first refuting it. See Derrida's discussion of Heidegger's view of Nietzsche in *Spurs: Nietzsche's Styles*, tr. by Barbara Harlow (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978), pp.73-85.

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from Nietzsche's life-long preoccupation with moral (or immoral) issues, including especially competing types of moralities — out of which his notions of the will to power and eternal recurrence developed — toward a view of Nietzsche as a somewhat unwitting ontologist concerned mainly with the question of Being.[26] In his critique of Austin, Derrida "does" something similar: he praises him for his critique of Kantian epistemology but attacks him for his so-called anthropomorphic concern with "values."[27] Both Austin's notion of the performative and Nietzsche's notion of the will to power are thus divested of their ethical import in favor of considerations of the ontological status of language, i.e., Heidegger's "faith in Being."[28]

Nietzsche is a key figure in understanding why Derrida's "triumph" over speech act theory was a defeat for historically and culturally oriented literary studies, not because he belongs to the poststructuralist tradition of Heidegger and Derrida, but because he stands outside of that tradition. Recall that the obsession with epistemology — Kant's legacy — was a by-product of his endeavor to shield morality from science by sacrificing metaphysics.[29] For that initially "defensive" purpose, Kant posited a noumenal realm rooted in the faculty of the imagination (reason). Like Schopenhauer and Kierkegaard, who tried to distance themselves from academic philosophy, Nietzsche carries on the original Kantian project of limiting the bounds of reason and prioritizing morality over epistemology, which meant doing away with the noumenal realm altogether. Heidegger and Derrida, by contrast, carry on the Hegelian project of inventing a specialized vocabulary that renders the Unknowable knowable, the inexpressible expressible:

26. As David Krell has shown in his commentary on Heidegger's *Nietzsche*, Heidegger misrepresents Nietzsche's concept of the will to power by ontologizing it. See Vol. 1, p. 19; Vol 2, p. 201; Vol 4, p. 275. For other criticism of Heidegger's ontological interpretation of Nietzsche, see Laurence Lampert, *Nietzsche and Modern Times* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), pp. 261-3; Tracy Strong, *Friedrich Nietzsche and the Politics of Transfiguration* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975), pp. 56-7, 220-24, 275-6; and Walter Kaufmann, *Nietzsche: Philosopher, Psychologist, AntiChrist* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1974), p. 420.

27. Derrida was certainly correct to attribute such a concern to Austin. In Lecture I of *How to Do Things with Words*, Austin links his "revolutionary" idea of language as performative to "the plain saying that our word is our bond" (pp. 9-10).

28. Nietzsche's concept of the will to power is "ethical" in that it views not just morals as a form of power, but power as a form of value-positing. The two primary ways in which power takes form as value are "master" and "slave" moralities, or "active" and "reactive" moralities. See Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, tr. by Walter Kaufmann (New York: Random House, 1968), pp. 291-292, 394; *On the Genealogy of Morals*, tr. by Walter Kaufmann (New York: Random House, 1968), pp. 481, 488 and 588.

29. Richard Rorty, *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979), p. 5.

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one which ups the ante for philosophical certainty over Descartes' and Kant's comparatively modest bids by investing those bids with ontological longing. It is a project suited to what Bourdieu called *homo academicus*, in which what is not known becomes the object of a technical inquiry that strives to achieve an ahistorical, or at least meta-narrative status.[30] Nietzsche, on the other hand, belongs to a tradition where the status of language as a temporal, concretely historical phenomenon guarantees its ethical force, where "words," as Goethe put it, "are deeds." It is a tradition that, besides Adorno, Lyotard and Bourdieu, includes kindred spirits such as Benjamin, Levinas, and, most importantly, Wittgenstein (1889-1951).[31]

II

Wittgenstein's late work[32] takes as one of its main targets the Fregean

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30. See Pierre Bourdieu, *The Political Ontology of Martin Heidegger* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1991), *Homo Academicus* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1984); and Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, *op. cit.*, pp. 108-10.

31. Lyotard is included in this list because of his preoccupation with the concept of "judgment" in a Kantian sense; his use of Wittgenstein's notion of "language games" in *Just Gaming,* tr. by Wlad Godzich (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1990); and his critique, in *The Differend*, tr. by Georges Van Den Abbeele (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988) of Heideggerian "ontological difference" with reference to speech act theory (pp. 101-29). The latter critique is of particular interest in that, contrary to Heidegger, it argues that language, cannot "say" what it does, but is a form of action irreducible to "thought." Lyotard's observation that language games, unlike natural languages, are "not translatable," recognizes the importance of the notion of "forms of life" in Wittgenstein's thought. On the other hand, his characterization, in *The Differend*, of Wittgenstein's late work as "anthropological empiricism" (p. 76), is misguided.

32. On Wittgenstein, see P. M. S. Hacker and G.P. Baker's *Scepticism, Rules and Language* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1985), *Wittgenstein: Rules, Grammar, and Necessity* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1985), and *Wittgenstein: Understanding and Meaning* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1980), as well as Joachim Schulte's *Experience and Expression: Wittgenstein's Philosophy of Psychology* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1993). Since the 1950s and 1960s, when Norman Malcolm, Stephen Toulmin, and D. Z. Phillips wrote about Wittgenstein, there has been a decline of interest his work; Richard Rorty's efforts have done little to revive that interest. See Newton Garver and Seung-Chong Lee *Derrida and Wittgenstein* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1994), and K. T. Fann, *Wittgenstein's Conception of Philosophy* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969). See also Thomas Morawetz, *Wittgenstein and Knowledge: The Importance of* On Certainty (Boston: University of Massachusetts Press, 1978); Henry Le Roy Finch, *Wittgenstein: The Later Philosophy* (Atlantic Highlands, New Jersey, 1997); Cora Diamond, *The Realistic Spirit: Wittgenstein, Philosophy, and the Mind* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1991); Austin Quigley, "Wittgenstein's Philosophizing and Literary Theorizing," in *New Literary History* 19 (1988), pp. 209-237; Anthony Cascardi, "The Grammar of Telling," in *New Literary History* 19 (1988), pp. 403-417; and James Edwards, *The Authority of Language: Heidegger, Wittgenstein, and the Threat of Philosophical Nihilism* (Tampa: University of South Florida Press, 1982).

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view of language as rule-governed, which Austin and Searle used in constructing speech act theory. At the same time, it avoids the abstract character of Derrida's account of context as boundless by devising a heuristic device, that of "the language game," which views language as a "spatial and temporal phenomenon" — a form of action — embedded in "forms of life." Wittgenstein's new "style of thinking," as he called it, is impelled by an intensely ethical, anti-modernistic, yet non-nostalgic effort to restore cultural and historical specificity to the uses of language.[33] Anti-academic in the tradition of Nietzsche, it is a style designed to combat what Benjamin called "the devaluation of experience"[34] brought on by the reduction of language to information, i.e., "the commodification of language." To this end, Wittgenstein's late work encourages a descriptive, rather than an explanatory approach to language, treating it "not as some non-spatial, non-temporal phantasm," but as a form of action whose conventions are relative to the circumstances, places, and times of their occurrence.

By viewing language as a conventional process or "language game," embedded in repetitive, but not necessarily rule-governed forms of life, Wittgenstein's new style of thinking gives a richer sense of that " materiality" of language conveyed by most structuralist and poststructuralist perspectives. For Wittgenstein, language is a "non-arbitrary" phenomenon,[35] not in the sense that its workings are informed by a "natural process," but

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33. Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Lectures and Conversations on Aesthetics, Psychology, and Religious Belief* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967).

34. Walter Benjamin, *Illuminations: Essays and Reflections*, ed. by Hannah Arendt, tr. by Harry Zohn (New York: Shocken, 1969), p. 90.

35. Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, tr. by G. E. M. Anscombe (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1972), p. 108. For Wittgenstein, "spatial and temporal phenomena" are to be contrasted with what occurs in the world of thought: "[The] divergence of expressive symbol and expressed thought is an inevitable consequence of the difference between spatio-temporal phenomena and the world of thoughts." Quoted in Garth Hallett, *A Companion to Wittgenstein's Philosophical Investigations* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1977), p. 191. Wittgenstein's emphasis on language as a form of action works hand-in-hand with his critique of thought as a "mental activity." See *Wittgenstein's Lectures, Cambridge, 1932-1935*, ed. by Desmond Lee (Totowa, NJ: Roman and Littlefield, 1980), pp. 77-80. The latter phrase, according to Wittgenstein, is misleading, because it makes it sound as if thought were a special, mysterious process. See *The Blue and Brown Books* (New York: Harper & Row, 1958), pp. 6-7, 16, 43; *Philosophical Investigations*, *op. cit.*, pp. 329 and 332. In *Wittgenstein and Derrida* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1984), Henry Staten links Wittgenstein's notion of language as "spatio-temporal phenomenon" with Derrida's "remainder" (p. 22). Insofar as both notions stress the singularities of language acts, Staten's comparison is well-founded. But from a Wittgensteinian viewpoint, the abstractedness of the notion of "remainder" (or "supplement") defeats the purpose of the formulation, which is to emphasize the unpredictability of language acts.

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that those workings are inseparable from the forms of behavior out of which they arise. Language is a determinate, but unpredictable phenomenon shaped by the recurrence of discursive and non-discursive conventions.[36]

Language games are unpredictable, not because rules are not important to their performance, but because "there can be no rule for the application of a rule."[37] There can be no meta-rule, grounded in a Kantian structure of consciousness, which escapes the deformations of meaning entailed by its application. Rather, the functioning of language obeys a logic that cannot be logically accounted for, because it provides the channels along which sense and nonsense, reason and thought run. What this means is that language games are not defined by their rules. What *counts* as "winning" or "losing" in any game is not a property common to all games, but a function of the application of its rules in particular cases for which there are *no* rules. Language games lack not just an epistemological foundation, but an ontological one as well; they have nothing in common with one another, including the property of "existence."[38] For Wittgenstein, as for Nietzsche, to ontologize language is to commodify it: to posit an ultimate "standard of equivalence" in "the thought" of Being. As Adorno emphasized, such reduction of language to a common ontological denominator reproduces in mystified form the conditions of commodity culture.[39]

Wittgenstein's new way of thinking is of value to literary critics, not in that it allows the development of a new "method" of literary study, but

36. Ludwig Wittgenstein, *On Certainty*, ed. by G. E. M. Anscombe and G. H. von Wright, tr. by Denis Paul and G. E. M. Anscombe (New York: Harper & Row, 1969), pp. 68 and 73: "Since a language game consists in the recurrent procedures of the game in time, it seems impossible to say in any individual case that such and such must be beyond doubt if there is to be a language game. . . . the language-game is so to say something unpredictable. I mean: it is not based on grounds. It is not reasonable (or unreasonable)."

37. This complements Wittgenstein's earlier view that "a picture cannot . . . depict its pictorial form." See Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, tr. by D. F. Pears and B. F. Guinness (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1974), 2.172, 2.174). See also Baker and Hacker, *Wittgenstein*, *op. cit.*, pp. 90-93; Crispin Wright, *Wittgenstein on the Foundations of Mathmatics* (London: Duckworth, 1980); and Henry McDonald, *The Normative Basis of Culture* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1986), pp. 35-36.

38. As Wittgenstein put it: "If everything that we call 'being' and 'non-being' consists in the existence and non-existence of connexions between elements, it makes no sense to speak of an element's being (non-being); just as when everything that we call 'destruction' lies in the separation of elements, it makes no sense to speak of the destruction of an element . . . 'If it did not *exist*, it could have no name' is to say as much and as little as: if this thing did not exist, we could not use it in our language-game." See Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, *op. cit.*, p. 50.

39. Theodor W. Adorno and Max Horkheimer, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, tr. by John Cummings (New York: Continuum, 1972), pp. 120-68; Theodor W. Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, *op. cit.*, pp. 61-128.

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in that it deepens historically and culturally minded approaches to such study, effectively dispensing with "across the board" distinctions between fictional and non-fictional discourse, and compelling the critic to focus on the functioning of language within specific literary and cultural contexts.

Wittgenstein's late work suggests a new style of thinking about fictional narrative, which opens narrative theory to the notion of language as action, thereby reconceiving some of its crucial tenets within the broader social and historical perspective of cultural studies.[40] Language is a "temporal phenomenon" in that it does not merely convey information, but performs linguistic acts. Fictional narrative is also a temporal phenomenon, whose meaning is a function not just of the events recounted in the story, but of the repetition and deformation of literary and cultural conventions presupposed by storytelling. Such a view of narrative as *performatively repetitive* challenges narrative theorists' account of the narrative act as disengaged from the social and historical context in which it occurs. That account derives from a confusion regarding the distinction between *story* and *discourse*, in which the former is given a fictional and the latter a *partly* fictional status. Although the stories recounted are often "make-believe," acts of telling those stories are not. To view such acts as "bracketed" is to deny the historical status of the conventions from which they arise.

Such a critique of the fictive status of the narrative act is not intended to blur narrative theory's distinctions between narrator and author, on the one hand, and narrator and story, on the other, but to sharpen them: to highlight

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40. See Gérard Genette *Narrative Discourse*, *op. cit.*, p. 213, and *Narrative Discourse Revisited*, tr. by Jane E. Lewin (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1988), p. 15. This view of literary discourse as "fictive," closely related to the view of literary discourse as "indirect," is articulated in two ways. For Genette, as well as Franz Stanzel in *A Theory of Narrative*, tr. by Charlotte Goedsche (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1984) and Dorrit Cohn in *Transparent Minds* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978), the narrative act is fictive in that the discourse it produces is "dual-voiced"; it partakes simultaneously of two realities, the reality of the "here and now" of the narrator's present-tense act of telling, and the reality of the "there and then" of the events recounted. According to this account, narrative discourse is "mediated," as Stanzel argues; it is suspended between two conflicting spatio-temporal orientations. For Kate Hamburger in *The Logic of Literature*, tr. by Marilyn J. Rose (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993), Emile Benveniste in *Problems in General Linguistics*, tr. by Mary Elizabeth Meek (Coral Gables: University of Miami Press, 1971), and Anne Banfield in *Unspeakable Sentences* (Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1982), narrative discourse is completely lacking in communicative content. What this means is that "no one speaks" in narrative (Benveniste, *op. cit.*, p. 208); there is no narrator. Rather, the narrative "tells itself." For Hamburger, this understanding of narrative leads to the conclusion that narratives told in the first person are not fiction at all (p. xiii).

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the sense in which narrative is a form of action distinct from the author's intentions and the content conveyed. Thus, the division of author/narrator/story can be seen to correspond, respectively, to the logically distinct categories of person/act/content — much as one might distinguish, in a dance performance, between dancer/dancing/dance. Only as act, not as person or content, can the performative features of narrative be accounted for.

Wittgenstein's late work has been discussed by literary critics, but not in relation to speech act theory and the Searle-Derrida debate[41] — despite Wittgenstein's influence on Austin and Searle.[42] Worse yet, there has been a tendency to assimilate Wittgenstein's views to those of Frege and Russell, or Heidegger and Derrida. As Derrida points out, there can be no sharp distinction between "analytic" and "continental" philosophy, for the terms themselves are neither logically parallel nor historically accurate because, among other things, the dominant trend of modern analytic philosophy was "Kantian."[43] It drew heavily on an "intentionalist" account of meaning in which concepts are posited as in some sense "inside the head." Moreover, it was a radical offshoot of the dominant Fregean trend of analytic philosophy, logical positivism, which was exported to America during the 1930s and became the basis of American philosophy until the 1960s.[44]

What Derrida fails to acknowledge is that Austin and Searle are

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41. This is strange, because Wittgenstein's late writings came out of the same context as J. L. Austin's speech act theory. Although Austin's work dates back to 1939, and Wittgenstein's late writings did not circulate widely until after WWII, there is little question that Austin's work, as well as "ordinary language philosophy," were influenced by Wittgenstein. Moreover, it was Austin's probings of language as a form of action that Searle later systematized. All of these works appeal to Wittgenstein for support.

42. The uses of Wittgenstein in literary theory have tended to divide across analytic/continental lines. Early critics of Derrida, such as M. H. Abrams, *Doing Things with Texts* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1989) and Charles Altieri, *Act and Quality* (Amherst: The University of Massachusetts, 1981), treated Wittgenstein as a common sense philosopher of language to be opposed to the Derridean skeptic.

43. Derrida, *Limited Inc.*, *op. cit.*, pp. 37-39. Other critics, including Staten, *Wittgenstein and Derrida* , *op. cit.*, and Steven Winspur, "Text Acts: Recasting Performatives with Wittgenstein and Derrida," in *Redrawing the Lines*, ed. by Reed Way Dasenbrock (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989), pp. 169-188, have posited a more harmonious relation. See Marjorie Perloff, "From Theory to Grammar: Wittgenstein and the Aesthetic of the Ordinary," in *New Literary History* 25 (1994), pp. 899-924; W. J. T. Mitchell, *Picture Theory* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1994); Reed Way Dasenbrock, "Redrawing the Lines: An Introduction," in *Redrawing the Lines*, ed. by Reed Way Dasenbrock (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989), pp. 3-26, and Susan Brill, *Wittgenstein and Critical Theory* (Athens: Ohio State University Press, 1995).

44. See Giovanni Borradori, *The American Philosopher*, tr. by Rosanna Crocitto (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1994), pp. 1-25.

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"Kant's heirs," not Edmund Husserl's, whose work Derrida and Heidegger made one of their central targets, by way of Frege, whose logicism, along with Russell's philosophy, are the basis of the modern analytic tradition. In neither of his critiques of speech act theory does Derrida mention Frege's work, and he does not seem to be aware that speech act theory's central notions, such as "sense," "reference," and "force," are Fregean. In dealing with Husserl rather than Frege, Derrida blurred the distinctively analytic assumptions of speech act theory,[45] and thereby weakened any appeal his argument might have had in the US. Yet, from another viewpoint, Derrida's "mistake" was philosophically perceptive. For, as Michael Dummett and others have pointed out, not only was Husserl's work influenced by Frege,[46] but the two philosophers shared a common Kantian predisposition to ground meaning in an intentionalist capacity of the mind to stipulate its own domain of application: in a consciousness within consciousness or *homo clausus*, as Norbert Elias put it, which Derrida described as "an organon of iterability . . . that is structurally secret" and which Wittgenstein called "the private language-game."[47]

What is more striking than Derrida's lack of familiarity with analytic philosophy is Searle's failure to acknowledge parallels between Derridean poststructuralism and major currents in modern analytic philosophy, such as W.V.O. Quine's attack on "the two dogmas of empiricism,"as well as his arguments concerning the radical indeterminancy of translation. The latter arguments challenge intentionalist accounts of meaning, and the Kantian notion of analytic truth to which those accounts appeal, in a way that more conservative analytic philosophers, such as Searle, have resisted. Although the differences here are at least as important as the similarities, both Derrida and Quine maintain that the uses of language entail a non-identity of

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45. In *Speech and Phenomena*, *op. cit.*, Derrida examines a distinction roughly analogous to speech act theory's division of the processes of language into the rule-governed and the non-rule-governed: Husserl's distinction between "expressive" and "indicative" signs, in *Logical Investigations*, tr. by J. N. Findlay (New York: Humanities Press, 1970), pp. 276-77.

46. This grounding is not psychological. As Michael Dummett emphasizes in *Origins of Analytic Philosophy* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1994), p. 24, both Frege and Husserl "extrude" thoughts from the mind. As Husserl put it in *Logical Investigations*, "signs are in fact not objects of our thought at all, even surrogatively; we rather live entirely in the consciousness of meaning" (p. 304). On the Kantian foundations of Frege's thought, see Jerrold J. Katz, *The Metaphysics of Meaning* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1990), pp. 1, 70 and 293.

47. Norbert Elias, *The Civilizing Process*, tr. by Edmund Jephcott (New York: Urizen, 1978); Derrida, *Margins*, *op. cit.*, p. 315; Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, *op. cit.*, pp. 269, 275.

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meaning — what Derrida calls "iterability" and Quine "non-synonymy"[48] — which deflates the immense status accorded by post-Kantian philosophers to epistemology.[49] Indeed, a basis for comparing, if not likening Derrida and Quine is suggested by the fact that Quine's critique inspired the development of the dominant school in analytic philosophy today — the so-called "post-analytic philosophy" of Donald Davidson, Saul Kripke, Richard Rorty, Hilary Putnam, and many others — just as Derrida's critique of structuralism inspired the development of poststructuralism.[50]

Wittgenstein's late work, which exercised at least some influence on Quine, shares far more in common with both postanalytic and poststructuralist perspectives than it does with Austin's and Searle's Fregean-derived speech act theories. But, it joins hands with elements of Austin's original concept of language as performative — and disengages from both postanalytic and poststructuralist perspectives — in fostering an ethical view of language as action. That view is profoundly anti-theoretical, but does not imply a rejection of the role of philosophy in literary criticism or, still less, a retreat to a so-called "pre-theoretical" critical perspective. Rather, it implies a broadening of the philosophical frame of reference such that critical awareness of poststructuralism as a philosophical tradition is increased and thereby also the ability to discriminate and use of elements of that and other traditions. In line with such a purpose, Derrida's notion of the "iterability" of language in conjunction with Austin's notion

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48. In *Word and Object*, (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1960), Quine writes: "The analytic sentences are those that we are prepared to affirm come what may. This comes to nought unless we independently circumscribe the 'what may.' Thus, one may object that we would not adhere to 'No bachelor is married' if we found a married bachelor; and how are we to disallow his example without appealing to the very notion of analyticity we are trying to define?" (p. 66). In *Quine and Analytic Philosophy* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1983), George Romanos describes Quine's critique of the analytic tradition as follows: "What breaks down completely is the analytic conception of language, the idea of a conceptual scheme that determines, at least in part, how we 'see,' comprehend, and describe reality" (p. 97). See also Katz, *The Metaphysics of Meaning*, *op. cit.*, p. 11. Searle's *Speech Acts* opens with a critique of Quine's attack on analyticity (pp. 5-12).

49. On Quine's notion of synonymy, see *From a Logical Point of View* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1980), pp. 22-7 and 130; *Word and Object*, *op. cit.*, pp. 37, 61-7 and 200-6; Romanos, *op. cit.*, pp. 108-15. In *Ontological Relativity* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1969), pp. 31 and 39, Quine distinguishes his position from Wittgenstein's. For more appreciative references to Wittgenstein in Quine, see *Word and Object*, *op. cit.*, pp. 76-7 and 260. See also Borradori, *op. cit.*, p. 37; and Katz, *the Metaphysics of Meaning*, *op. cit.*, pp. 175-6.

50. On "post-analytic philosophy," see Cornel West, "The Politics of American Neo-Pragmatism," in *Post-Analytic Philosophy*, eds. John Rajchman and Cornel West (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985), pp. 259-75.

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of language a "performative," can be adapted to a Wittgensteinian perspective in a way which encourages the deformalization and historicization of literary study, especially as applied to fictional narrative.

III

The crucial idea that informs Wittgenstein's late work is that language is a "spatial and temporal phenomenon, not . . . some non-spatial, non-temporal phantasm" — an action, not independent of the conventions of language, relative to the places and times of their occurrence. The practice of language is indeed prior to the meanings made of it. As Wittgenstein puts it, such a non-epistemological perspective shifts "the axis of reference" of language around so as to remove "*the preconceived idea* of the crystalline purity" of concepts and bring into focus the impurity of language as a "spatial and temporal phenomenon."[51] Once such a conceptual rotation is effected, words lose their ethereal properties and become events whose meanings, rather than dictating their performance — as a rule might dictate its application — are a function of that performance within on-going language games.

Wittgenstein's view of language as a "spatial and temporal phenomenon" is designed to combat what he calls a certain "picture" of "meaning" as an "ethereal object in the mind."[52] That picture dictates, first, that meaning is "something" *in* the mind, and second, that that something can be described as an abstract set of properties common to different uses of words. Thus, according to this picture, the meaning of the word "game" consists in what is common to all games.[53] Wittgenstein objects to this account, because it conjures "meaning" as a sort of phantasm standing behind the uses of words; what is common to all instances of a word cannot be any one of those instances. It must therefore be some sort of property in its own right, to be described as a private, intentional act of consciousness grounded in innate mental capacities, or what Searle calls "a ground floor property of the mind."[54]

Such a philosophical pespective, rooted in Kant, dictates that the problem of meaning be seen as a problem involving the nature of rules. How is it that one is able to apply the appropriate rule to the appropriate domain of objects or range of experience? Frege's answer, adopted by

51. Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, *op. cit.*, p. 108.
52. Wittgenstein, *Blue and Brown Books*, *op. cit.*, p. 47.
53. Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, *op. cit.*, pp. 65-6.
54. Searle, *Intentionality*, *op. cit.*, p. 26.

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most pre-Quinean analytic philosophers, is that such rules must be able to pre-determine their domain of application: to specify their own "extensions." What enables rules to do this is a capacity of the mind, logically grounded in Frege's case, rather than intuitive as in Kant's, presupposed by one's ability to form significant sentences. That capacity constitutes a sort of meta-rule for the application of all rules, excepting itself.

For Wittgenstein, as for many poststructuralist as well as "post-analytic" philosophers, this account of meaning is misguided in two general ways. First, it tends to mystify the uses of language by grounding their meaning in a sort of consciousness *within* one's consciousness or *homo clausus*, which can arbitrate between the rules constituitive of the concepts in which one thinks and the objects to which those concepts apply. For Wittgenstein, by contrast, there are many overlapping connections or "family resemblances" between instances of the word "game," but no single element that lies behind all such instances. The rules and conventions which give words meaning are contingent forms read out of the practice of language; they do not specify in *a priori* fashion such meaning. According to Wittgenstein, the effort to do so, in the form of private acts of consciousness, would if successful deprive the very terms "correct" and "incorrect" as well as "same" and different" of any significant use, for the speaker would have no way of knowing whether his identification of a given object was "right." There would be no criteria for correctness, excepting purely empirical ones which, for Wittgenstein, are never sufficient by themselves.[55]

The second general reason why Wittgenstein objects to the account of meaning as an ethereal object in the mind is that it evades the problem of how to judge the meaning of one expression to be "identical" to that of another. If intentionality constitutes a sort of meta-rule for the application of all rules, excepting itself, how is it that one is able to know that one is applying the same meta-rule in different cases? Intentionalist philosophers have traditionally responded to this objection — as Searle does —

55. Wittgenstein's critique of "the private language game argument," as it is called, is closely related to his emphasis on repetitive and iterative patterns in language practices. As Michael Dummett put it, Wittgenstein's "argument seeks to destroy the conception of the private object that I, but only I, can recognise. . . . Wittgenstein is in effect assuming that we cannot suppose an object to exist unless it is possible to have thoughts about it, and, in particular, to recognise it as the same again." See Dummett, *Origins of Analytic Philosophy*, *op. cit.*, p. 24. For a discussion of how Wittgenstein's attack on empiricism leads to an attack on subjectivism, see Andrew Oldenquist, "Wittgenstein on Phenomenalism, Skepticism, and Criteria," in *Essays on Wittgenstein*, ed. by E. D. Klemke, (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1971), pp. 167-178. See also Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, *op. cit.*, pp. 283 and 410; *Blue and Brown*, *op. cit.*, pp. 52-4.

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by maintaining that there are certain types of sentences whose meaning is "analytic" or self-identical and whose truth-value is therefore guaranteed by the terms of their expression.[56] But, as Quine argued, the proposition, "x is x" (the prototype of all analytic propositions) is "true" only by virtue of the fact that it has no meaning whatsoever. Or, as Wittgenstein asked rhetorically, what possible use could such a proposition have in language practices?[57] Once the intentionalist (or essentialist) capacity of the private self to confer identity is undermined, there seems to be no justification for retaining the highly privileged category of analytic truth.

With the collapse of the category of analytic propositions comes also a deflation of the immense status accorded by Kantian and post-Kantian philosophers to epistemology. Although for Wittgenstein it is a presupposition of many language games that they "refer" to "reality," there is no sublime, meta-language game, grounded in a private self, that would show the latter presupposition to be generally warranted or unwarranted. Language practices are not (generally) representational, however, not because they are in some sense removed from reality, but for exactly the opposite reason: because they partake too much of the environments of their occurrence — of the "logic" of social and cultural forms — to be separated from them.[58] As Wittgenstein says, "the term 'language-*game*' is meant to bring into prominence the fact that the *speaking* of language is part of an activity, or of a form of life . . . To imagine a language is to imagine a form of life."[59] This emphasis on language as a temporal phenomenon converges with the Frankfurt School's critique of commodity culture: "You say: the point isn't the word, but its meaning, and you think of meaning as a thing of the same kind as the word, though also different from the word. Here the word, there the meaning. The money, and the cow that you can buy with it. (But contrast: money, and its use.)"[60]

The contrast Wittgenstein suggests here corresponds to the familiar

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56. Searle, *Speech Acts*, *op.cit.*, pp. 5-12. For discussions of intentionality, see Quine, *From a Logical Point of View*, *op.cit.*, pp. 21-2; Katz , *The Metaphysics of Meaning*, *op.cit.* pp. 15 and 178.

57. As Wright has argued in *Wittgenstein on the Foundations of Mathmatics*, *op.cit.* pp. 342-63, Wittgenstein's critique of analyticity, unlike Quine's, does not entail a dismissal of the distinction between contingent and necessary truths — between, e.g., the rules of a game and the moves made while playing that game. See also Baker and Hacker, *Wittgenstein: Understanding*, *op. cit.*, pp. 267-9.

58. See Wittgenstein, *On Certainty*, *op. cit.*, pp. 110, 204; Finch, *Wittgenstein: The Later Philosophy*, *op. cit.*, p. 90.

59. Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, *op. cit.*, pp. 22, 19.

60. *Ibid.*, p. 120.

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Marxist distinction between "exchange value" and "use value": between a reduction of the value of labor to a common standard of equivalence in order to render such labor, as "commodities," exchangeable (the money exchanged for the cow), and as an understanding of the products of labor as possessed of an incommensurable individuality linked to the "familiar earthbound associations" acquired by objects over time in particular circumstances ("money, and its use").[61]

To view language as a thing in the mind — a meaning — is analogous to viewing objects as commodities. From a Critical Theory perspective, the commodification of labor brought about "the disintegration of the properties of objects" by assigning to them a symbolic value that allowed for "the measured equivalence of qualitatively incommensureable forms": that allowed for the reduction of objects to items of consumption fully exchangeable by virtue of their conformity to a universal standard of equivalence.[62]

Analogously, from a Wittgensteinian perspective, the "commodification of language" resulting from Kantian epistemology deprived language of its spatial and temporal specificity by reducing meaning to a fully "exchangeable" item of mental consumption: by reducing meaning to a cognitive content that could serve as a standard of equivalence for the "qualitatively incommensureable" and multiform uses of language in different circumstances. The triumph of Kantian epistemology was in this sense parallel to the triumph of consumer culture; the former paved the way for the latter by carving out a privatized space within the self that could serve as a substratum for "acquisitive cognition" and commodity self-fulfillment (Lears XV): what Raymond Williams termed "internal capitalization."[63]

Crucial to Wittgenstein's strategy for combatting the commodification of language and culture is his resistance to the hegemony of any

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61. In *Philosophical Grammar*, ed. by Rush Rhees, tr. by Anthony Kenny (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974), Wittgenstein, who was a friend of Marxist economist Piero Sraffa (who was in turn a friend of Antonio Gramsci) and who attempted, unsuccessfully, to emigrate to the Soviet Union in the 1930's, elsewhere remarks on the comparison between "money and its use" in a way consistent with the Marxist notion of use value: "Money, and what you can buy with it. In some cases an object; but also permission to occupy a seat in a theatre, or a claim, or rapid transportation, or life, etc." (p. 63).

62. Jean-Christophe Agnew "The Consuming Vision of Henry James," in *The Culture of Consumption: Critical Essays in American History, 1880-1980*, Richard Wrightman Fox and T. J. Jackson Lears, eds. (New York: Pantheon, 1983), p. 72.

63. Raymond Williams, *The Country and the City* (New York: 1973), p. 249. Charles Taylor, "To Follow a Rule," in *Rules and Conventions: Literature, Philosophy, Social Theory*, ed. by Mete Hjort (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992), pp. 167-185.

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particular logic or set of rules by which language is supposed to work. Wittgenstein does not deny that the workings of language obey a kind of "logic." But such logic manifests itself in the form of blurred and shifting ranges of the possibilities of belief and practice, rather than in the form of rules grounded in an atemporal structure of the mind, as in the Kantian tradition.

Although a language game could hardly be described at all if there were no rules to be read out of its practice, those rules take shape within a nexus of habitual activities and regularities that include, but are not limited to rule-governed behavior and which are comparable, as Charles Taylor has pointed out, to Bourdieu's notion of the *habitus*.[64] "If language is to be a means of communication, there must be agreement not only in definitions but also (queer as this may sound) in judgments. This seems to abolish logic, but does not do so."[65]

Wittgenstein here uses "judgments" in a sense close to that of Jean-François Lyotard; one *must* judge, even when the criteria for judgment are lacking.[66] As Wittgenstein says, judgments are "principles of judgment."[67] And the criteria for judgment, in the final analysis, *will* be lacking.[68] Logic is indeed value-ladden in that it presupposes "agreement. . . in judgments." This does not "abolish" logic, but rather widens its scope, depriving it of the fixed form assumed by most logicians since Aristotle.[69] Logic is made "interesting," not by having fewer or less rigorous distinctions applied to it, but by being made more complex and variable. The vehicle of this "opening up" is the notion of the language game:

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64. Dominick LaCapra's notion of "repetitive temporality" in *History, Politics, and the Novel* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1987), p. 9, similarly places emphasis on the repetitive nature of language practices. See also Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, tr. by Richard Nice (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1977), p. 9; and Charles Taylor's "To Follow a Rule," *op. cit.*, pp. 167-185.

65. Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, *op.cit.*, sec. 242.

66. Lyotard, *Just Gaming*, *op. cit.*, pp. 14-16.

67. Wittgenstein, *On Certainty*, *op. cit.*, p. 124: "If I have exhausted my justifications I have reached bedrock, and my spade is turned. Then I am inclined to say: 'This is simply what I do . . . When I obey a rule, I do not choose. I obey the rule *blindly*."

68. Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, *op. cit.*, pp. 217, 219.

69. "Logic is not as simple as logicians think . . . What we usually call 'logic' is only to be applied to a tiny part of the game with language. Which is another reason why logic is just as uninteresting as it should apparently be interesting." *Wittgenstein's Lectures, Cambridge 1932-1935*, *op. cit.*, pp. 12-13. For a discussion of Wittgenstein's and Frege's radically different concepts of meaning as logic, see Gordon Baker, *Wittgenstein, Frege, and the Vienna Circle* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1988), pp. 160-66; and Schulte, *Experience and Expression*, *op.cit.*, p. 144.

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"everything descriptive of a language game is part of logic."[70] To effect a change in the concept of logic that would give temporal processes a central role in accounting for the forms of reason, Wittgenstein thus needed to view logical distinctions as arising from the always contingent, never wholly predictable practices of language, rather than being imposed on those practices. The notion of language games helps to do this by denying access to any general concept of language, scientific or poetic, on which a general concept of logic could be hung: by preventing one from subliming language as a practice intrinsically different from other practices.

In *On Certainty*, Wittgenstein images the temporal nature of the "logic" of language by likening the relation between what have traditionally been called "empirical" and "logical" propositions to a relation between the "hardened channels" of a river-bed and the "river-bed of thoughts," which constitute "world-pictures" or "mythology."[71] The "movement of the waters" here corresponds to the potentially singular, performative features of language acts; "the shift of the bed itself" to the forms and patterns of repetition that are built up and dissolved by such acts. Although the channels of the river-bed may appear to offer a fixed basis in "reality" for language, in fact those channels are modified by the very language acts which would describe that reality. There is indeed a radical uncertainty which pertains to language by virtue of the fact that any effort to account for the meaning of language acts participates in or acts on that meaning. Just as, for Wittgenstein, the application of a rule may always deviate from or subvert that rule, so too the *act* of repetition is always potentially singular.

By "rotating" the perspective on language around so as to exhibit its spatial and temporal features, Wittgenstein's notion of language games effects a "Copernican Revolution" in understanding the role of context in meaning. Supplanting the common picture of context as a more or less fixed background — the picture of context as an epistemological anchor that grounds explanations of language — Wittgenstein's notion of language games encourages one to view context as an *iterative* structure of overlapping channels of meaning or pathways of significance built up over time from the repetition of discursive and non-discursive events. The term *iterative* is framed, in part, against Derrida's notion of language as

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70. Wittgenstein, *On Certainty*, *op. cit.*

71. *Ibid.*, p. 15: "The mythology may change back into a state of flux, the river-bed of thoughts may shift. But I distinguish between the movement of the waters on the river-bed and the shift of the bed itself; though there is not a sharp division of the one from the other."

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"iterable." The latter notion highlights the internally self-divided nature of language acts: that any given language act is split between its repetitive and singular features, and that such a split generates an undecidability of meaning.[72] Like Derrida, Wittgenstein views language acts as at once repetitive and singular. Unlike Derrida, however, he does not set such repetitiveness and singularity in opposition to one another; rather, their relation is a modulated and differential one whose uncertainty of meaning arises from the *decidable*, but limited character of descriptions. It is an uncertainty which, like Bohr's and Heisenberg's,[73] is attached to the tools of "measurements," and not to an intrinsic undecidability which grounds inexplicability of meaning in an ontological or "pre-ontological" originary difference. Thus, for Wittgenstein, language practices are "iterative," rather than "iterable," as for Derrida, in that their logic is not restricted to the form of binary opposition, but allows for gradations of differences of meaning — of what Wittgenstein, with Bourdieu, calls the different "rhythms" and "tempos" of language games and forms of life.

Wittgenstein's understanding of language as a temporal process ungoverned by any single logic emphasizes the ethical force of language.[74] In the spirit of Kant's first *Critique*, Wittgenstein wants to "clear

72. For Wittgenstein, identity or non-identity of meaning is given through acts of iteration characteristic of particular language practices; it cannot therefore be understood in terms of a generalized concept of "iterability, or primordially repetitive structure of signs" (Derrida, *Speech and Phenomena, op. cit.*, p. 51). Rodolphe Gasche describes such a structure as an "original repetition" that "is not, like empirical repetition, a repetition that could possibly take place" (*Tain, op.cit.* p. 212). Such a universal, *a priori* paradigm of iterability obscures the graded differences and patterns of meaning that may be "read out" of the complex workings of language.

73. For the outline of a "principle of narrative uncertainty" analogous to Bohr's and Heisenberg's — and distinct from Derridean "undecidability" of meaning — see Henry McDonald, "The Narrative Act," in *Surfaces*, Vol. IV, No. 4 (Feb. 1995).

74. Such an understanding of language is also reflected in Wittgenstein's "style" of philosophizing. Whereas the analytic style often features a series of numbered propositions, embedded within an explanatory, discursive framework, Wittgenstein's division of his remarks into numbered paragraphs lacks any overarching commentary that would configure them into a set pattern. Still less does it resemble the form of a "grand" narrative characteristic of continental philosophy perpetuated, in a deconstructed form, by Derrida. Rather, Wittgenstein's practice of numbering his remarks, which consist of everything from detailed analytical arguments to aphoristic pronouncements, promotes a sense of language as discontinuous and open-ended, yet gives those forms "perspicuous representation." See Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, *op. cit.*, p. 122. Although, like analytic philosophers, Wittgenstein attached great importance to "clarity," the clarity he sought was intended neither to simplify language nor to provide a conceptual picture that would subsume the particularity of experience within its horizons, but rather to light up the unseen, but most visible elements of language.

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the ground" of explanatory, theoretical agendas that would diminish the ethical or moral force of language acts. The youngest son of a wealthy Jewish family who had converted to Christianity, Wittgenstein grew up in *fin-de-siècle* Vienna, steeped in a rich cultural milieu.[75] True to this heritage, he always viewed his work in ethical terms. In the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, he gives language ethical (as well as aesthetic and religious) force through his "picture theory" of language as a logical form which shows, rather than states its meaning; the rule-governed nature of language is confined to its representational functions and is sharply distinguished from its expressive ones, which can no more be stated than can a picture describe itself. Rather, the ethical character of language shows itself *through* its logic. In a strikingly Heideggerian passage in the *Tractatus*, he says: "Logic is not a field in which we express what we wish with the help of signs, but rather one in which the nature of the natural and inevitable signs speaks for itself."[76]

In his later work, Wittgenstein veers sharply away from the ontological path to which his earlier thinking had pointed, supplanting the emphasis on language as a form of showing with an emphasis on language as a form of doing. Logic remains as vital as ever, but it is no longer grounded in the correspondence or "fitting" of sense to reference, ideas to objects. To put the matter baldly, logic is denied its *a priori* status; it is viewed as a social and cultural construction of language acts and hence also a vehicle of the ethical force which those acts carry. In the language of Goethe's *Faust*, which Wittgenstein thought might serve as a motto for the whole of his later philosophy: "*Im Anfang war die Tat* (In the beginning was the deed)."[77]

Wittgenstein's adoption of this famous line is revealing in that it points to the extent to which his late work was impelled by a deep-seated antimodernism that functioned in a self-consciously "modernistic" way. From Wittgenstein's perspective, Goethe, with his "contempt for laboratory experiment,"[78] as Wittgenstein approvingly described it, was a figure from

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75. Cf. Allan Janik and Stephen Toulmin, *Wittgenstein's Vienna* (New York: Humanities Press, 1970).

76. Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, *op. cit.*, p. 124.

77. Quoted in Ray Monk, *Ludwig Wittgenstein: The Duty of Genius* (New York: The Free Press, 1990), p. 306.

78. The full quotation indicates just how deep-seated was Wittgenstein's hostility to scientific, hypothetical modes of reasoning: "Does Goethe's contempt for laboratory experiment and his exhortation to us to go out and learn from untrammelled nature have anything to do with the idea that a hypothesis (interpreted in the wrong way) already falsifies the truth?" See *Culture and Value*, *op. cit.*, pp. 10-11)

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a pre-modern, romantic past. That past was no longer conceptually "reachable" from the "present" of the first half of the 20th century in which Wittgenstein lived. [79] Undoutedly, Wittgenstein felt strongly the loss of the "world" of Beethoven, Goethe, and even Nietzsche; his reference to "the darkness of these times" in the preface to *Philosophical Investigations* is one of his many expressions of contempt for modern life in general and "science and industry" in particular.[80] Yet, Wittgenstein refused to view his own work as part of the tradition of the artists and thinkers whom he admired most: he viewed his new "style of thinking" about language as thoroughly modern in that it did not so much evoke the "greatness" of the past as signify its disappearance. As he put it: "I am in a sense making propaganda for a new way of thinking."[81] Such a characterization of his own work as "propaganda" is hardly in the spirit of his chosen motto. For the "ethic" which informs Goethe's words belongs to what Warren Susman calls a "culture of character," in which the preeminent values were self-sacrifice and the striving to become one with a higher self. During Wittgenstein's lifetime, such a "culture of character" was being displaced by a "culture of personality," whose

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79. The following passage reflects both Wittgenstein's disenchantment with and commitment to such a present: "There are problems I never get anywhere near, which do not lie in my path or are not part of my world. Problems of the intellectual world of the West that Beethoven (and perhaps Goethe to a certain extent) tackled and wrestled with, but which no philosopher has ever confronted (perhaps Nietzsche passed them by). And perhaps they are lost as far as Western philosophy is concerned, i.e. no one will be capable of experiencing, and hence describing the progress of this culture as an epic." *Ibid.*, p. 14.

80. Grouping of Nietzsche with Beethoven and Goethe may seem odd, but it was less so for Wittgenstein, who shared with Nietzsche a reverence for Goethe and an early preoccupation with Schopenhauer's writings. As Monk has pointed out (*Ludwig Wittgenstein*, *op. cit.*, p. 122), despite his great respect for Christianity, Wittgenstein's ethical attitude toward religious belief resembles Nietzsche's. For a brief discussion of more general affinites between Wittgenstein and Nietzsche, see Henry McDonald, "Nietzsche, Wittgenstein, and the Tragic Henry James," in *Texas Studies in Literature and Language*, No. 34 (1992), pp. 403-449.

81. Wittgenstein, *Lectures and Conversations*, *op. cit.*, p. 28. "My type of thinking," Wittgenstein said to Maurice Drury, "is not wanted in this present age, I have to swim so strongly against the tide." The tide which Wittgenstein saw himself as swimming against was that of "science and industry": "It isn't absurd, e.g., to believe that the age of science and technology is the beginning of the end for humanity; that the idea of great progress is a delusion . . . that there is nothing good or desirable about scientific knowledge." Wittgenstein even goes so far as to associate "science and technology" with the apocalypse: "The truly apocalyptic view of the world is that things do not repeat themselves." Quoted in Monk, *op. cit.*, pp. 485-6. In this sense, like Nietzsche, Wittgenstein was a deeply anti-apocalyptic thinker, whose recourse to repetitive forms of temporality were a way to resist the catastrophe threatened by "the age of science and technology."

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ethos was therapeutic, championing the values of self-fulfillment and self-realization.[82] As Wittgenstein's biography demonstrates (e.g., his renunciation after WWI of his father's enormous fortune; his self-banishment to a small village in Switzerland after publishing the *Tractatus*; and his lifelong, principled, and unremitting hatred of professional philosophy), he belonged very much to the past — to a "culture of character" that he saw as irremediably lost. Thus , he fashioned a tool, language games, meant for modern uses; that is why he describes his "philosophical investigations" as discursive ramblings through a large and complex *city*, rather than through the pristine countryside so often described by romantic writers.

Yet, Wittgenstein's "city" is not, in fact, *modern*. On the contrary, crucial to Wittgenstein's notion of language games is a sense of the "pastness" encoded in language — what Wittgenstein, again metaphorically, calls "certain associations and memories" that arise while walking "in the environs of a city."[83] As he continues: "Our language can be seen as an ancient city: a maze of little streets and squares, of old and new houses, and of houses with additions from various periods; and this maze is surrounded by a multitude of new boroughs with straight regular streets and uniform houses."[84] Wittgenstein shares with Adorno and Benjamin a deep-seated anti-modernism acutely aware of the complicity which resistance to modernity entails. Indeed, his notion of language games is similar to Adorno's "negative dialectics" in that each has little "positive" theoretical content, but is rather best seen as a strategy of resistance to modernity's commodification of language and meaning. Adorno's "logic of nonidentity," in particular, valorizes the non-conceptual that is the counterpart of Wittgenstein's insistence that logic is logically ungrounded and that language acts are always potentially unpredictable. All three are impelled by a sense that philosophy, in Adorno's words, "must give up the great problems" and redefine itself in non-theoretical, non-totalizing terms.[85]

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82. Warren Susman, *Culture as History: The Transformation of American Society in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Pantheon, 1984), pp. 271-285.

83. Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, *op. cit.*, p. 215.

84. *Ibid.*, p. 18.

85. Theodor Adorno, "The Activity of Philosophy," tr. by Benjamin Snow, in *Telos* 31 (Spring 1977), p. 127. As Wittgenstein put it, "If one tried to advance *theses* in philosophy, it would never be possible to debate them, because everyone would agree to them." See Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, *op. cit.*, p. 128. Similarly, Adorno writes: "the crux of philosophy is what happens in it — essentially, philosophy is not expoundable. If it were, it would be superfluous." See Theodor Adorno, *Prisms*, tr. by Samuel Weber and Shierry Weber (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1981), p. 240; *Negative Dialectics*, *op. cit.*, pp. 33-34 and p. 130.

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IV

How can Wittgenstein's account of language as a temporal phenomenon be used to help deformalize and historicize narrative theory? His anti-epistemological view of language can be viewed as assimilating and reconceiving speech act theory's and Derridean deconstruction's accounts of language as performative and iterative. On the one hand, language practices are *performative* in that they do not merely transmit information or communicate meaning, but perform actions whose significance depends on the possibility of being linked through conventions with other actions and events. On the other hand, language practices are *repetitive* in that the contextual features which make these practices meaningful presuppose forms of repetition and channels of sense that entail gradations of "sameness" or identity of meaning. Such an understanding of language as iterative or performatively repetitive restores Austin's original insight that language is a form of action. It views such action not just as intentional and rule-governed, but as potentially singular or embedded in contexts of repetitive activities that are logically ungrounded and therefore unpredictable in meaning. Such a method also preserves Derrida's insight that language is a temporal process whose meaning is at once repetitive and singular, but broadens understanding of such temporality by viewing the *distinction* between the repetitive and singular features of language as a variable contingent on acts of iteration within particular discursive practices.

This distinction between language as performative and interative makes it possible to apply Wittgenstein's approach to the study of literary narratives. Just as language is a temporal phenomenon, in that it does not merely convey information, but performs linguistic acts within on-going, repetitive practices or language games, so too fiction does not merely recount events in stories, but performs acts of storytelling or narrative acts, whose reference is to the discursive practices of writers and readers. These are cultural acts of transmission that both repeat pre-existing discourses and alter them as they do so; their status is "iterative" or at once repetitive and performative.[86] The subversive, non-repetitive character of the text is revealed not merely in language, but as an act *of* language or event linked to other discursive and non-discursive practices. A work of fiction, by this account, is like a "move" or series of moves in a language game; the discursive conventions repeated must be distinguished from the deviations in the act of telling the story. Such an approach to describing

86. This is very close not just to Bourdieu's notion of *habitus*, but also to LaCapra's notion of "repetitive temporality." See LaCapra, *History*, *op. cit.*, p. 9.

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fictional discursive practices highlights the ways in which language performs against socially and historically grounded patterns of repetition.

This method of distinguishing, but not separating into hypostatized categories, the performative and interative features of language acts, suggests a way of reconceiving narrative theory's distinction between *story* and narrative *discourse* as a distinction between "story" and "narrative act," where the former highlights the repetitive, causally connected and rule-governed features of narrative associated with "plot,"[87] and the latter highlights the performative, potentially singular features of narrative associated with the construction of the plot. The central target against which this reconception is framed is the widespread assumption that the fictional narrative act is a "suspended," "pretended," or "fictive" one characterized by its disengagement with cultural forces.[88] A "fictive" agent is not necessarily an entirely fictional character, but rather an agent suspended between the fiction of the story and the "reality" of the discursive framework in which the telling occurs. In Homer's *The Odyssey*, for example, both Ulysses (in Books X-XII) and Homer (in the rest of the poem) are "fictive" narrators,[89] whose telling "pretend to" the "real" act of narrating,

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87. Traditionally, "plot" has been understood as the causal ordering of a sequence of events. See Forster, *op. cit.*, p. 86. With some qualifications, Peter Brooks, in *Reading for the Plot* (New York: Knopf, 1984) pp. 10, 12, 326, places himself in this tradition. He defines plot as an "intentional structure" which provides "the logic and dynamic of narrative." Paul Ricoeur, in *Time and Narrative*, tr. by Kathleen Blamey and David Pellauer (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1988), p. 167, similarly defines plot as "the intelligible whole that governs a succession of events in any story." See also Wayne Booth, *The Rhetoric of Fiction* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1983), pp. 92 and 126; Fredric Jameson, *The Political Unconscious* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1981), pp. 19-20; Hayden White, *The Content of the Form* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987), p. 12; Walter Ong, *Orality and Literacy* (London: Methuen, 1982), pp. 142-3 and 152; Mieke Bal, *On Story-Telling* (Sonoma, California: Polebridge Press, 1991), p. 52.

88. The main example of such an assumption is the work of Genette. Yet Genette, more than any other narratologist, has drawn attention to the importance of the narrative act in accounting for narrative discourse. See Gérard Genette, *Narrative Discourse*, tr. by Jane E. Lewin (Ithaca: Cornel University Press, 1980), pp. 26 and 29; and *Narrative Discourse Revisited*, tr. by Jane E. Lewin (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1988), p. 16. The status given to the narrative act here is quite different from that presupposed by Genette.

89. That is why Genette chastizes critics for confusing "the narrating instance with the instance of 'writing,' the narrator with the author, and the recipient of the narrative with the reader of the work: a confusion that is perhaps legitimate in the case of a historical narrative or a real autobiography, but not when . . . dealing with a narrative of fiction . . . In fiction, the real narrative situation is pretended — and this pretense, or *simulation* (which is perhaps the best translation of the Greek *mimesis*) is precisely what defines the work of fiction." See Genette, *Narrative Discourse*, *op. cit.*, p. 213; and *Narrative Discourse Revisited*, *op. cit.*, p. 15.

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which is exemplified in the authorial act of writing. Both narrator Ulysses and narrator Homer are fictive in that they are suspended between two distinct spatio-temporal orientations. Ulysses is suspended between the fictional story he recounts in Books IX-XII and the narrative discourse of *The Odyssey* produced by narrator Homer. Narrator Homer is suspended between the fictional world of the poem as a whole and the authorial act of writing associated with the (presumably) historical person, Homer. Ulysses' act of narrating is embedded in narrator Homer's act of narrating, just as the latter act is embedded in author Homer's act of writing.

More generally, for Genette, fictional narrative consists of a series of narrative levels, intradiegetic and extradiegetic, each of which is embedded in the other and may therefore be represented, as Genette often does, by a series of bubbles similar to those in cartoons. The bubbles, each of which encloses the other, extend outward toward the real world, but end before reaching it; for, on the other side of the biggest bubble, the one that encloses all the others, stands the author. "In narrative," says Genette, "or rather behind or before it, there is someone who tells, and who is the narrator. On the narrator's far side, there is someone who writes, who is responsible for everything on the near side. That someone . . . is the author."[90]

In sum, for Genette, the author lacks narrative agency in that it is on the outside of, or does not "exist" in the bubble world: in that it is not "fictive," as are both (heterodiegetic) narrator Homer and (homodiegetic) narrator-character Ulysses. But what exactly is the status of this "real" authorial act of writing which the fictive narrative act "simulates" or pretends to? Genette suggests two answers. The first is provided by comparing fictional narrative with historical narrative.[91] In historical narratives, the historical events are prior to the narrating, which produces the historian's account of those events. By contrast, in fiction the narrator's act of telling produces the narrative discourse from which one "reads" the fictional events of the story. Although the narrative act in fiction is the originary source of story and narrative discourse — without it, Genette emphasizes, there would be no narrative discourse and in most cases no story[92] — that narrative act, according to the terms of this comparison of fiction and historical narrative, is a "fictive" or "pretended" one in that the *events* it recounts are not "real" historically.

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90. Genette, *Narrative Discourse Revisited*, *op. cit.*, p. 148.

91. Genette, *Narrative Discourse*, *op. cit.*, p. 213; *Narrative Discourse Revisited*, *op. cit.*, p. 14.

92. Genette, *Narrative Discourse*, *op. cit.*, p. 26.

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But there is another sense in which the fictional narrative act may be understood. This sense is revealed by comparing, as Genette does, fictional narrative with oral storytelling.[93] The latter, which employs present-tense verbs far more often than do most written narratives, is a form of "direct discourse" that contrasts with the "indirectness" of fiction.[94] In oral storytelling, the narrative act is simultaneous with both the story told and the narrative statement produced by that act; there would seem to be no distinction of temporal order between the three categories. In fiction, by contrast, the narrative act is a written or at least non-oral one, which is "known" to the readers or audience only after that act has been completed. The act of telling in written form is a mediated, relatively private one that contrasts with the immediacy and intrinsically more public and social nature of the oral act of storytelling. The fictional narrative act is thus a fictive one, by the terms of this comparison, in that it "imitates" the immediacy and publicity of oral storytelling. According to these two comparisons, then, the fictional narrative act is "fictive" in that it presents itself as a copy of the more epistemologically reliable narrative acts of historical narrative and oral storytelling.

From a Wittgensteinian perspective, however, these comparisons are confused. To say, on the one hand, that the events portrayed in historical narrative have a status more "real" than those portrayed in fiction is to say only that one's concept of history assigns the former events such a status. This does not imply that historical events are "unreal"; rather, as Hayden White has argued, it implies that the power of historical events is a function of the role historical narratives play in culture, not of the "nature" of the events historians recount. To distinguish, as Genette does, between historical and fictional narratives on the basis of the different types of events they represent is to invest a characteristic of discursive practices in the event. It is to obscure the very distinction which Genette, at the level of fictional narrative, has done much to clarify: the distinction between the content of a story or series of events and the act of telling that story. Only the mystification of historical events as somehow occurring outside any discursive frame of reference allows Genette to compartmentalize fiction and history in an "across the board" fashion, ignoring the ways in which the two discursive forms are

93. Genette, *Narrative Discourse*, *op. cit.*, pp. 33-34; *Narrative Discourse Revisited*, *op. cit.*, p. 14.

94. To illustrate what is at issue in the contrast between direct and indirect discourse, Wittgenstein's example of "I am in pain" versus "He has a pain" is useful; see McDonald, "The Narrative Act," *op. cit.*, as well as Banfield, pp. 23-63, and M. M. Bakhtin, *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language* (New York: Seminar Press, 1973), p. 128.

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not just radically different from, but also entwined with one another.

Genette's comparison of fiction with oral storytelling betrays a mystification different from, but as important as that entailed by the comparison of fiction and historical narrative. In the former comparison, what is pictured as "outside" or logically prior to any discursive frame of reference is the immediacy of the relation between teller and listeners. Oral storytelling is seen as closer to direct discourse than fiction, which is a form of indirect discourse. The relevant point here is not that fiction is not in some sense "indirect," but rather that such indirectness cannot be adequately described by juxtaposing it to an idealized model of what is "direct."[95] Of course, the cases of oral and written narrative are different, but not in the sense that the former is produced by a public act, the latter by a private one. A fictional narrative act that was not public — that belonged to a "private language game" — would be similar to an oral discourse that could not be understood by anyone; neither would qualify as an act of telling. As Genette rightly emphasizes, telling or diegesis presupposes a teller; but that teller is not an autonomous agent who, in fictional narrative, produces the narrative discourse and the story recounted in that discourse — whose narrating brings into "being" the latter two categories. Rather, an act of telling presupposes not just a teller, but a teller embedded in a social and cultural context.

Genettean narratology's view of the narrative act shares elements in common with Austin's and Searle's Fregean-derived view of the speech act. Just as speech act theory deprives the performative speech act of an effective social and cultural status by defining it in relation to intentionally grounded, rule-governed processes, so too Genettean narratology deprives the narrative act of an effective cultural and historical status by viewing it as a "fictive" act set against the backdrop of more epistemologically reliable acts in the "real" world. In speech act theory, "propositional content" serves as an epistemological anchor for illocutionary force by virtue of the rule-governed nature of that content. Similarly, in narrative theory, the diegetic content or the story, although fictional, consists of a series of causally ordered events which ground the narrative act. "Causally ordered" serves

95. According to Wittgenstein, when one says "I am in pain," one is not making an empirical claim as when one says "He has a pain." One can supply criteria for the truth or falsity of "He has a pain," to the extent one takes for granted the subjective certainty of "I am in pain." But one cannot then double back and use those same criteria to ground that which they are grounded on. Rather, statements like "I am in pain" are ungrounded conceptual features of one's way of life: of language games and forms of life. They serve a function, Wittgenstein contends, comparable to an inarticulate cry in that they delineate a concept of subjectivity and do not refer to a pre-existing subject.

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a role, in narrative theory, analogous to "rule-governed" in speech act theory; both causally ordered events and rule-governed processes are made possible by an intentional agent who is referred to in narrative theory as a "narrator" and in speech act theory as a "speaker."[96]

Narrative theory's characterization of narrative as an indirect, fictive form of discourse is comparable not just to Austin and Searle's characterization of fiction as a "pretended" or "suspended" speech act, but also to Coleridge's notion that reading literature involves a "suspension of disbelief"; the state of "believing in" the fictions one reads has a "special" status, in comparison to other types of belief, because it lacks referential grounds.[97] What all three characterizations conjure is a picture of fictional reading practices such that when one picks up a novel, one performs a phenomenological reduction or *epoché*, in which the "real world" is bracketed to enable one to plunge into an other, fictional world. Such "suspension of disbelief," which transforms the *reader* into a fictive persona, is mandated by the suspension of the teller's social and historical status, which transforms the *author* into a fictive *persona.*

Fictional reading practices, however, show little evidence of such a massive conceptual procedure at work; one simply begins reading and the "pretense" which one adopts of taking seriously what one reads requires no effort at all. It is precisely because one takes it seriously that one continues reading. It is not, indeed, the pretense which makes possible reading fiction, but the conventions of fiction that make possible the pretense.[98] If Aristotle were to read a modern novel (e.g., one set in

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96. The acts which those agents perform in speech act theory are relatively "punctual," whereas in narrative theory they span over a period of time. That is why intentionality, in narrative theory, is a function not just of the narrator, who "acts" within a mode of time Genette terms "narrating time," but of the fictional characters, who act, feel, and think within a mode of time Genette terms "story time" (or "narrated time") and whose psychological processes serve as a sort of connective tissue that binds the events of any fictional narrative together. To cite Forster's example, "The king died and then the queen died" is not really a "plot," because the events are possibly unrelated. But "The king died and then the queen died of grief" is such a plot, because it establishes a causal relation between the events by attributing to the queen a psychological motivation.

97. See chapter 14 of Samuel Coleridge, *Biographia Literaria*, ed. by George Watson (New York: Dutton, 1956). Genette refers approvingly to Coleridge's "durable phrase" in "The Pragmatic Status of Narrative Fiction," in *Style* 24 (1990), p. 63. That phrase, "the suspension of disbelief," describes the reading act in a way complementary to that which "fictive" describes the narrative act.

98. "A child," Wittgenstein wrote, "has much to learn before it can pretend . . . Lying is a language game that needs to be learned like any other one." See Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, *op. cit.*, p. 249.

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ancient times), he would lack a knowledge of or familiarity with the reading conventions modern readers take for granted and would therefore require some such massive conceptual procedure in order to continue reading — in order to suppress his skeptical doubt or to suspend his disbelief about the "reality" of the world being portrayed.

But modern readers do not need such a procedure, because their familiarity with fictional reading conventions guarantees not the truth or falsity of fiction, but its "reality"; modern readers, routinely perform as agents of a process of cultural transmission in which a wide range of stories is handed down and repeated, performed, and iterated. As members of a modern culture who "believe" in fiction, modern readers act as transmitters of discursively encoded forms of experience represented in fiction. One can no more choose to "believe" in the discursive conventions that are the inheritance of a culture than one can choose to be born into that culture. As Benjamin and Lyotard have both argued, the very status of the author as a "subject" who "creates" fictional stories is contingent on that subject's having listened to, read, or somehow "taken in" pre-existing stories and other discursive materials.[99] It is the iterations of language, the repetitions and deformations of inherited discursive materials, which ground the epistemological distinction between "fiction" and "non-fiction"; it is not epistemology which grounds those iterations. Only by abandoning the quest for a neutral, theoretical standpoint from which to view the workings of language — only by shifting "the axis of reference of our examination" of language around, as Wittgenstein said — can the powerful compulsion to see fiction as a special, "bracketed" sort of language use be resisted.

Like speech act theory, narrative theory exhibits what Wittgenstein called "the tendency to etherealize language": the tendency to view the meaning of language as an object within the mind. To criticize such a subliming of fictional discursive practices is not to blur fiction and reality; nor is it to blur the distinctions between story, narrator, and author which modern narrative theory has labored to establish. On the contrary, it is to sharpen and strengthen those categories by reformulating them in terms of content, act, and person. That reformulation turns on the very distinctions which Genette and other narrative theorists have helped to determine: the distinctions between the content of the story told; the act of telling that story; and the person or agent performing that act. It applies those distinctions not just to the hermetically sealed world of fictional discourse, but to

99. Benjamin, *Illuminations*, *op. cit.*, pp. 83-109; Lyotard, *Just Gaming*, *op. cit.*, pp. 31-43.

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the fictional practices in which that discourse arises, thereby viewing narrative theory as a tool *of* cultural studies.

Crucial to such a resituating of the conceptual terrain of narrative theory is the retention of Austin's original notion of language as performative; or rather, not just the retention of such a notion, but its assimilation to a Wittgensteinian understanding of language as iterative or performatively repetitive. That iterative notion of language enables one to dispense with the anthropomorphized concept of the narrator as a fictive presence embedded in the text without reinstating the epistemological hegemony of the author as an intentionalist agent. It makes it possible to "shift the axis of our examination" of fictional narrative around, so as to bring into focus the cultural and historical status of the narrative act. At issue in such a remapping of the conceptual geography of narrative discourse is the epistemological status of the narrator as a guarantor of textual meaning.

Genette proposes a distinction between narrator and author that invokes just such a status. Whereas a narrator "knows" the places, events, and persons he portrays — which include, presumably, the thoughts and feelings of the characters which are recounted — an author can only "imagine" them.[100] This formulation is striking, because it associates the narrator with a sort of "knowingness" which the fictive reader may partake of, but which is denied to both author and "real" reader. Because the latter have no existence within the diegetic universe of fictional discourse, they do not "hear" such discourse so much as "overhear" it, to borrow an image from J. S. Mill's celebrated contrast between poetry and discourse. Their relation to diegetic meaning is one of acquaintance, not of direct experience. Fictional narrators, by contrast, not only know what they tell, but know *that* they know; they are able to stage, as it were, their own acts of imagination, to scenically frame the contents of their own consciousness. Much in the manner of a fictional character in a "stream of consciousness" narrative, who at once experiences and tells the contents of his consciousness, the fictive narrator is viewed as able to "embody" himself in the narrative and to retain control over the meaning of that narrative. Only as an ethereal, fictive entity can the narrator perform such a self-transcending feat. The fictive role assigned to the narrator thus confers on him a specialized epistemological power, which in turn preserves fiction's privileged, yet at the same time insulated cultural status.

The term "narrator" is etymologically derived from the Latin word for "to relate," *narrare*, which is ultimately allied with "to know." Yet, as

100. Genette, *Narrative Discourse*, *op. cit.*, p. 214.

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Anne Banfield has observed, it is even more import that, prior to the 20th century, critics had available to them only one term to describe the teller of fiction — "author" — whereas nowadays both terms, "author" and "narrator," are used with roughly equal frequency. Moreover, those uses betray little or no consistency of distinction in meaning between the two terms. Only narrative theorists such as Genette employ the terms with such consistency, and they do so by incorporating one into another: by retaining both terms, but picturing the narrator as an "imitation" author, presence sufficiently etherealized so as to exercise the sort of intentionalist control over the meaning of his narrative that, in the 20th century, one has come to see the author as evidently lacking.

Traditional, pre-modern notions of the poet had no need of such epistemological guarantees, narrative or authorial. On the contrary, the poet was imaged to be a "mouthpiece" of his Muse: as a "harp" set into vibration by the winds of higher powers. The role of the poet, as performer of poetic and narrative acts, was viewed as exercising dominion over the poet's intentions; his "identity" was exhausted by such a conventionalized role. Thus, it would be extremely odd to view Homer, in his capacity as oral storyteller, as "simulating" some other, "real" act of narrating. Rather, the traditional image of the poet is that of a conduit of powers which he need not even understand, much less control. Nothing could be more foreign to such a traditional view than the modern concept of the narrator as an intentionalist presence who "exists" fictively as a separable presence *within* the person of the equally intentionalist author. As Georg Lukács wrote: "The novel tells of the adventure of interiority . . . [It] raises an individual to the infinite heights of one who must create an entire world through his experience . . . heights which no epic individual, not even Dante's, could reach, because the epic individual owed his significance to the grace accorded him, not to his pure individuality."[101]

Fiction alone posits a narrative subject who is logically prior to artistic convention and form, who is able to manipulate and control, parody and subvert such convention and form, rather than be manipulated and controlled by them. That is why Coleridge's notion that reading literature entails a "suspension of disbelief" is characteristically modern. To suspend disbelief is not merely to insulate belief from forms of power in the real world; it is to view the act of reading as one in which the reader places himself within the narrator's unfolding of "the mind's eye," i.e., within a

101. Georg Lukács, *The Theory of the Novel*, tr. by Anna Bostock (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1971), pp. 89 and 93.

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Kantian-like structure of consciousness that grounds the meaning of the events recounted. Such a structure is described by Kant as an "objective subjectivity" which, like the fictive narrative *persona*, partakes of two worlds at once.[102] On the one hand, such subjectivity is an imaginary, internalized space of thought and emotion distinct from the external world described by modern science; on the other, it is more "real" than the external world, because it is an epistemological center which confers meaning on the external world, thereby justifying the accounts of modern science. The methods employed by scientists and novelists mirror one another; fiction is indeed like a controlled experiment which takes place in "the laboratory" of the imagination. Such interdependence of science and fiction accounts for why Nietzsche viewed Socrates — that most "un-Greek" of ancient philosophers — as anticipating modern attitudes toward both science and art, associating his thought with "the development of a new art form, the model of the novel."[103] Nietzsche's point was that the rise of a scientific worldview had its philosophical origin in the Socratic concept of "man as knower," and that it was precisely such belief in the "knowingness" of the subject, such faith in consciousness as an epistemological ground, that made possible the development of modern fiction.

To challenge the concept of the narrative *persona* as a fictive, epistemologically grounded agent is to prioritize the narrative act over either content, or the person who performs that act. In Flaubert's words, it is to be influenced less by the concept of the narrator as transparent — "everywhere present, but nowhere visible" — than by the model of the narrator suggested in traditional storytelling, whose embedded narrators are visible and whose acts of telling are often elaborately dramatized. It is to dismantle Genette's vertically oriented structure of narrative levels by viewing the narrative act not as the originary source of the story, but as an "act" which presupposes the existence of prior cultural discourses in relation to which it gains meaning. It is, finally, to view the narrative act as performatively repeating pre-existing stories and other discursive materials, thus producing a narrative discourse which is culturally, historically, and textually embedded.

Such an understanding of the narrative act is consistent with the fact

102. Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason*, tr. by Lewis White Beck (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merill, 1956), pp. 22-3, 25.

103. Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, tr. and ed. by Walter Kaufmann (New York: Random House, 1968), p. 91. A similar characterization of Socrates is found in Makhail Bakhtin's *The Dialogic Imagination*, tr. by Michael Holquist (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981), pp. 24 and 130-1: "The Socratic dialogues reflect . . . the simultaneous birth of scientific thinking and of a new artistic prose model for the novel."

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that most readers, including critics, not only fail to distinguish between author and narrator, but in their interpretations they do not valorize the intentionalist status of the person who produces the text. Rather, they set up discursive "objects of comparison" (literary, cultural, personal) in relation to which their interpretations may be supported. To emphasize this feature of fictional reading practices is not to discount the value of formalistic analysis, for the distinction between "the text as such" and the text as a cultural artifact is still preserved. But that distinction is given a heuristic, as opposed to a logical status. Contrary to the metaphysical picture of interpretation as taking place in a world limited to an isolated reader and isolated text, intratextual and cultural interpretations must be seen as interdependent.

Here, it becomes important to rethink not just the concept of the narrative act, but of "the author" as well. To view the author as a non-intentionalist agent whose status is radically distinct from the narrating act and the narrative discourse is not to prohibit that author from appearing as an element of the narrative discourse produced by that act; such a prohibition would just promulgate a confusion of the categories of person and act, which are not distinguished empirically, but belong to different language games. Thus, when one watches a dance performance, one does not distinguish on empirical grounds the dancer (a role adopted by the person) from the dancing (an act), anymore than one distinguishes the latter from the dance (a story). Rather, when talking about the dancer, as opposed to the dancing, one changes what one sees, much as when, in *Gestalt* psychology, one changes what one sees in a drawing, e.g., of a duck/rabbit; except that in the case of the dancer versus the dancing, one invokes different histories, so to speak, of descriptive discourses — one of which involves recounting the events of the person's life as dancer (rather than, e.g., as parent) and the other invokes the bodily and artistic movements characteristic of this performance or of the dancer's style. It would be absurd to claim that, because one sees the "person" of the dancer as one sees his dancing, the former is "within" the latter. It is equally absurd to conclude that, because one detects authorial discourse within the author's act of narrating, the person attached to such discourse is "within" that act.

What, then, is an author?[104] An author is a person who narrates in the sense that, like the traditional storyteller, of the various social roles it adopts, only one is directly relevant to the narrative act. One might refer to such a role as that of the "narrator," keeping in mind that a narrator is not a

104. This answer is intended to be simpler than, but not inconsistent with Foucault's in "What is an Author?" and Barthes' in "The Death of the Author," *op. cit.*

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separate person, but rather the *role* of the person as performer of narrative acts. That role is not "pretended," for the only basis of such pretending could be another role of the pretender, and why should not the latter role be viewed as pretended as well? The role of the author is not intentionally grounded, but is rooted in the discursive practices of narrating, which presuppose the existence of prior stories that the author retells.

Contrary to Genette and other narrative theorists, the narrator is not an originary source who "brings into being" the story, and whose role is like that, as Henry James mockingly put it, of an otiose "all-knowing immortal," a *deus absconditus*, or at least a *deus otiosus,* content to observe, and barred from participating.[105] Rather, the act of narrating always refers to a pre-existing story to which authorial intention is relative, rather than vice-versa. The narrative act is a telling, but one which is not representationally or intentionally grounded; it iterates pre-existing discourses and deforms them as it does so. What narratives "repeat" is not a universal structure or originary source, in the manner of Platonic anamnesis, but simply one another; they repeat themselves genealogically, to borrow Nietzsche's term, in clusters of different types of stories.

To emphasize the repetitive, as opposed to the representationalist functions of narrative, is to grant the narrative act cultural status. Such a "bestowal" of cultural status will be an empty gesture unless the concept of fictional diegesis is shifted from a vertical orientation — in which narrative is treated as a fictive imitation of real events, as exhibited in historical narrative — to a horizontal orientation — in which narrative is treated as a series of repetitive acts which participate, along with historical narrative, in the formation of concepts of reality. To challenge any sharp contrast of fiction with historical narrative is thus also to suggest that the concept of fictional mimesis be rotated from a vertical, synchronic orientation to a horizontal, diachronic one: from an orientation in which fictional discourse is viewed as a reflection of the outer, more "real" levels of discourse to an orientation in which narrative discourse is viewed as a series of performative repetitions that expand into the discourses of the "real" world, intersecting at various points with those of historical narrative.

Such a conceptual rotation creates a space of discourse that allows the narrative act to emerge from the shadowy realm it inhabits in Genettean narratology, and to assume a central, but by no means hegemonic role in

105. Henry James, "Prefaces to the New York Edition," in *Henry James: Literary Criticism. European Writers and The Prefaces*, comp. by Leon Edel and Mark Wilson (New York: The Library of America, 1984), p. 1295.

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the study of narrative. As an act of cultural transmission, the narrative act is wholly non-fictive; far from creating the story *ex nihilo*, the storyteller adapts and makes new the story he *re*tells. Stories are thus transmitted, and deformed as they are transmitted, by an "author" whose authority is culturally, rather than subjectively constituted: whose authority derives from the storyteller having "taken in" the tales he now tells. Thus, when in *The Country of the Pointed Firs* and elsewhere Sarah Orne Jewett presents herself as a recipient of the tales she tells, she highlights the most important quality of any author: that of having been a sensitive listener to or receiver of prior tales. "Tell me what the artist is," as James put it in the preface to *The Portrait of a Lady*, "and I will tell you of what he has been conscious."[106] What this means is that in interpreting fiction a pre-existing model is set up, implicitly or explicitly, as an "object of comparison" for the reader's understanding of the narrative. This is crucial to an iterative notion of narrative. When readers describe their impressions of a story, they do not do so within a conceptual universe limited to an isolated text and isolated reader. Rather, they presuppose a relational nexus of varying discursive materials — literary, cultural, and personal — without which their interpretations could not be articulated. Both critics and "ordinary" readers employ objects of comparison that function not just to support their textual interpretations, but also to form those interpretations. The concept of the teller, whether as author or narrator, does not function as a conceptual anchor of such comparative procedures, because subjectivity is always dwarfed by or immersed in the discursive materials that make his act of telling possible. Only the picture of literature as a special, rarefied form of discourse that can only be accounted for in terms of what it is not — history or oral storytelling — compels one to think that critical practices are somehow dictated by a unitary entity who implants meanings in texts.

This critique of the fictive narrative *persona* is consistent with poststructuralism's critique of the author as a creator *ex nihilo*, whose status is independent of social and cultural conventions. Unlike poststructuralism, it identifies the main source of difficulty in the status given to the *narrator*, rather than *author*.[107] Such a difficulty stems from the heritage of New Criticism's intentionalist fallacy, which absented the author from the scene

106. James, "The Prefaces," *op. cit.*, p. 1075. For James as for Hawthorne, all telling is retelling. The *act* of telling a story is an activation of cultural memory — a memory which "begins," to paraphrase a line from Katherine Anne Porter's "Old Mortality," before the storyteller was born.

107. Banfield, *op. cit.*, pp. 183-184.

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of interpretation only to reconfigure that author as an ethereal, "non-spatial and non-temporal phantasm" — as a fictive narrative *persona*, without cultural or historical specificity — and then reinsert him into the text.

Granting cultural and historical status to fictional discourse entails giving increased prominence to the role of the author as a culturally specific, characteristically fallible person; it is such a *person*, not some ghostly incarnation of one, who "intends" meanings and "sympathizes" with characters. Yet, such a person is not a reliable arbiter or epistemological register of the meanings of texts. Rather, an iterative notion of narrative, while granting a role to the author, sharply constrains that role, suggesting that the primary object of study is an action or event, not a person or content.

V

In the Searle-Derrida debate, the literary critic was offered opposing concepts of language and asked to choose between them; the criteria for such a choice was how well those concepts provided a theoretical model for literary and critical practices. Wittgenstein's work does not offer a third and better alternative but, on the contrary, his "value" can be realized only when such a model for the relation between philosophy and criticism is abandoned. Here it is helpful to contrast Wittgenstein's notion of language games with certain uses made of Stanley Fish's notion of "interpretive communities."[108] The latter is clearly motivated by a need also central to Wittgenstein's late work: to give the contexual features of language an important temporal role in accounting for its workings. The notion of interpretive communities, however, conflicts in two respects with Wittgenstein's notion of language games. It tends to situate the subject outside of language, and to allow that subject to take a relativistic view of discursive frameworks, as though such were "separate but equal" ways of viewing the world. Thus, critics speak of "language games" or "interpretive communities" of new criticism, reader response criticism, feminism, cultural theory, etc., maintaining that each of these interpretive frameworks is of potential value and that it is up to the critic to decide which is best. Participation in a particular community, this account suggests, is a function of

108. In "How To Do Things with Austin and Searle," in *Is There a Text in this Class? op. cit.*, p. 241, Stanley Fish claims that his critique of speech act theory "follows from Wittgenstein's notion of a 'language game' in which words are responsible not to what is real but to what has been laid down as real (as pickoutable) by a set of constituitive rules." But as Fish acknowledges in *There's No Such Thing as Free Speech and It's a Good Thing Too* (New York, 1994), he was not directly influenced by Wittgenstein (pp. 292-3).

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one's subjective inclinations: of a "decision" to adopt a particular mode of interpretation. For Wittgenstein, however, participation in a language game is not a matter of choice.[109] To view it as such is to encourage a way of thinking about language that was one of the main purposes of the notion of language games to combat: a way of thinking that commodifies the meaning of different discourses making them equivalent.

Like Wittgenstein's notion of language games, relativistic accounts of language emphasize the role of "making comparisons" in accounting for its processes. But for Wittgenstein the function of those comparisons is not to provide a means of generalizing beyond the particular case at hand, much less to set up an agenda for "a future regularization of language,"[110] but rather to direct attention to the features of that case as an "object of comparison": "We think that our view will not have the generality we want it to have if it is really true only of the one case. But the prototype [i.e., the language game] ought to be clearly presented for what it is, so that it characterizes the whole discussion and determines its form. This makes it the focal point, so that its general validity will depend on the fact that it determines the form of discussion rather than on the claim that everything which is true only of it holds too for all the things that are being discussed."[111]

What Wittgenstein is getting at can be made clearer by considering a feature of language games neglected in critical commentaries: that language games are not fragments of a language, but should be considered as "complete."[112] Thus, Wittgenstein contends that a language game might consist only of orders and reports in battle or of sentence-questions and "yes" and "no" answers. For example, in the same passage in which he images language as an "ancient city," he comments: "Do not be troubled by the fact that [some language games] consist only of orders. If you want to say that

109. Wittgenstein's hostility to such a procedure is pronounced: "Being acquainted with many languages prevents us from taking quite seriously a philosophy which is laid down in the forms of any one. But here we are blind to the fact that we ourselves have strong prejudices for, and against, certain forms of expression; that this very piling up of a lot of languages results in our having a particular picture. If you say there are various systems of ethics you are not saying they are all equally right. That means nothing. Just as it would have no meaning to say that each was right from his own standpoint. That could only mean that each judges as he does." See Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Zettel*, tr. by G.E.M. Anscombe (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1970), pp. 323; quoted in Rush Rhees, *Discussions of Wittgenstein* (London: Thoemmes Press, 1998), p. 101.

110. Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, *op. cit.*, p. 130.

111. Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Culture and Value*, tr. by Peter Winch (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1980), p. 14.

112. Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, *op. cit.*, p. 18; and *The Blue and Brown Books*, *op. cit.*, p. 81.

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this shews [sic] them to be incomplete, ask yourself whether our language is complete — whether it was so before the symbolism of chemistry and the notation of the infinitesimal calculus were incorporated in it; for these are, so to speak, the suburbs of our language. (And how many houses or streets does it take before a town begins to be a town?)"[113]

Much in the manner of Henry James in the "New York Prefaces," Wittgenstein conceives of the workings of language as a "geometer's circle," whose boundaries — the possibilities of belief and behavior — are continually expanding, like a "spreading . . . table."[114] Wittgenstein's point in the above passage, which is consistent with James's, is not that there is a principle of closure that informs language games, but rather that the ability to extend a language does not show that it was previously incomplete. This point is vital, because it indicates that there is no *a priori* logic dictating what does or does not constitute a language game; although the boundaries of a language game may in any given case be extended, this does not mean that it is part of the rules of the original language game that they *could* be extended. Such a perspective conflicts with the assumption, central to modern linguistics, that a "competent" speaker of a language must be able to generate an infinite number of sentences in that language. For Wittgenstein, however, such an account of linguistic competence imposes an *a priori* logic on the practice of language, rather than reading that logic out of such practice. Wittgenstein's point, again, is not that language practices cannot be extended; rather, such capability is not logically encoded in the language prior to its being extended. One must work outwards from the practice, and not think that its possible extensions can be anticipated beforehand. To describe the "logic" of a language game, then, is to confine one's generalizations about language to the particular practices, and not to give those generalizations an explanatory status applicable to different practices. That is why "deciding" to play this or that language game plays no role in Wittgenstein's concept of the language game: such decisions could only be made on the basis of an understanding of the rules of different language games that was somehow prior to their practice.[115]

Implicit here is a fierce polemic "against theory," comparable to that enunciated by Walter Benn Michaels and Steven Knapp. Yet, the motivations

113. Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, *op. cit.*, p. 18.

114. James, "Prefaces," *op. cit.*, p. 1177; cf. also pp. 1064-65.

115. As Wittgenstein says: "So you are saying that human agreement decides what is true and false?" — It is what human beings say that is true and false; and they agree in the *language* they use. That is not agreement in opinions but in form of life. See Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, *op. cit.*, p. 241.

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in the two cases are different.[116] The neo-pragmatist polemic is impelled by a desire to grant the critic a large degree of interpretive freedom; Wittgenstein's, by a need to constrain such freedom. The latter need is reflected in his use of the term "form of life," whose import should not be confused with the "undifferentiated flux" sometimes envisaged by Henri Bergson and advocates of *Lebensphilosophie*, but rather encourages a recognition of the inevitably *situated* nature of language acts and the *partiality* of perspectives. What is meaningful will always hinge on what is familiar; one must therefore stop trying to give language games a theoretical basis, for "the ground of any language game is not an ungrounded proposition, but an ungrounded way of acting."[117] What makes language games possible is a willingness to treat as "reliable" the ways of life in which those language games are embedded: "I really want to say that a language-game is only possible if one trusts something (I did not say 'can trust something')."[118] Trust is indeed the "bedrock" which Wittgenstein speaks of in the *Investigations* and *On Certainty* as providing the "channels" along which language practices flow.[119] As with St. Augustine, St. Anselm, and other medieval philosophers whom Wittgenstein admired, for him trust is prior to understanding. One trusts in order to understand; takes a position within a culture in order to act on it.

As usual with Wittgenstein, however, these elements of anti-modernism carry with them a highly modernist consequence: that one accepts the radical uncertainty of any ultimate ground for language practices. That uncertainty should be sharply distinguished from Derrida's "undecidability" of meaning, for it is an uncertainty which presupposes precisely the decidability of meaning in particular cases. As Nietzsche liked to stress, to the degree one makes a commitment to something "in particular," one undermines its universal basis.[120] Although the "bedrock" of language practices is trust, that trust entails a radical distrust about the ability of theory to account adequately for such practices. In contrast to Heidegger's and Derrida's philosophical styles, both Wittgenstein's and Nietzsche's

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116. Walter Benn Michaels and Steven Knapp, "Against Theory," in *Against Theory: Literary Studies and the New Pragmatism*, ed. by W. J. T. Mitchell (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985), pp. 11-30.

117. Wittgenstein, *On Certainty*, *op. cit.*, p. 110.

118. *Ibid.*, p. 509.

119. Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, *op. cit.*, p. 217; *On Certainty*, *op. cit.*, p. 96.

120. This is a crucial feature of Nietzsche's notion of "master" or "active" morality. See "Beyond Good and Evil," *In Basic Writings of Nietzsche*, tr. by Walter Kaufman (New York: Random House), pp. 179-436, and *On the Genealogy of Morals*, *op. cit.*, pp. 439-602.

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are impelled by a radical distrust of any purported logic of language.

That distrust is in turn closely linked to the distrust of the self as an autnonomous agent, which informs the "culture of character" from which Wittgenstein's and Nietzsche's ethically oriented ways of thinking arise. As theoretical activities, explanation and interpretation are traditionally given a status distinct from what is being explained or interpreted. But, for Wittgenstein, all explanations and interpetations are themselves *part* of a logical framework; they are not explanations and interpretations of that framework. To guard against subliming interpretive practices, Wittgenstein issues one of his more misunderstood pronouncements: "In philosophy . . . we may not advance any kind of theory. There must not be anything hypothetical in our considerations. We must do away with all *explanation*, and description alone must take its place."[121]

This does not endorse, in any sense, a positivistic criterion of meaning. Rather, the "description" Wittgenstein is talking about is that of the logic of language games, of the possibilities generated by language's workings: "We remind ourselves, that is to say, of the kind of statement that we make about phenomena."[122] Nothing in the language game is excluded from logic: "Everything descriptive of a language game is part of logic."[123] One cannot "get at" such logic through explanation and interpretation, both of which Wittgenstein associates with a scientific, hypothetical method of investigation, because such explanation and interpretation already presuppose the logic they would describe. On the contrary, logic can be got at only by shifting "the axis of reference of our examination of language around," so as to bring into focus the roughness of language as a "spatial and temporal phenomenon." Crucial to an understanding of language as iterative is an acceptance of that roughness: an acceptance that the repetitions of language are subject to the continuous, but unpredictable deformations of their performance. What this means for Wittgenstein is that, when the notion that language is an activity is taken seriously, one must also take seriously one's inability to provide language with a logical foundation by way of explanation or interpretation.

Wittgenstein applies his anti-theory polemic not just to philosophy — although that is the primary target — but to all discourse. Indeed, his late work is characterized by a preoccupation with identifying and attacking the metaphysical concepts that characterize even "ordinary language"

121. Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, *op. cit.*, p. 109.
122. *Ibid.*, p. 90.
123. Wittgenstein, *On Certainty*, *op. cit.*, p. 56.

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practices. What this means is that Wittgenstein's critique of theorizing in philosophy should not be understood as a rejection of philosophy *per se*, i.e., a rejection of philosophy as a tradition shaped by social and cultural forces as much as any other discursive practice. Rather, it entails a rejection of its claim to be something besides practice. "Theory," as he uses the term, makes just such a claim; and it is for that reason he regards it not as a language game, but as a metaphysical tendency that haunts language games, philosophical and otherwise. Most readers of literature tend to feel that no theoretical account of the responses to literature can do complete justice to them. As his advice to F.R. Leavis "to give up literary criticism," as well as his harshly critical response to Ogden and Richards' *The Meaning of Meaning* indicate, Wittgenstein would certainly have assented to this judgment, but would have given as his reason not that philosophy is irrelevant to critical responses, but that such responses are grounded in "forms of life" over which one does not have cognitive control.[124] To prioritize practice over theory is not to claim that there is such a thing as a non-conceptual, theory-free practice, but that there are no *general* grounds for distinguishing between literary practices and the concepts associated with them, and therefore no grounds for constituting "literary theory" as an autonomous discipline. In this fashion, the role of philosophy in criticism is not abolished, but deprived of theoretical status — of the expectation that it may eventually produce an adequate account of literary and critical practices.

Although such a perspective disallows any appeal in criticism to philosophy for explanatory models of language, that approach is not simply restrictive, for the restrictions it imposes serve a philosophically liberating function. A Wittgensteinian understanding of the role of literary theory is not only less theoretical than that presupposed by most literary theorists, but more philosophical. It takes a critically skeptical view of explanatory accounts of language, judging philosophical theories and methods from the standpoint of the traditions from which they emerge and the philosophical agendas which they seek to carry out. In this sense, the best characterization of Wittgenstein's own philosophical perspective is that it is "parasitic" on analytic and continental traditions. But what this means is that it is best understood when seen in the context of both traditions — and of "the confrontations" between them.

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124. F. R. Leavis, *The Critic as Anti-Philosopher* (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 1982), p. 143. On Wittgenstein's response to Ogden's and Richards' *The Meaning of Meaning*, see Monk, *Ludwig Wittgenstein*, *op. cit.*, pp. 214, 291. Ogden and Richards' "miserable book," as Wittgenstein put it, presupposes a causal theory of meaning that was anathema to him.

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Post-Shoah Political Theology

Aryeh Botwinick

Early in the development of Western religion, in the writings of Marcion and others, it seemed jarring that the Creator God, who fashioned what turned out to be a defective and faulty universe, should also be the author of redemption.[1] Unlike negative theology, Gnosticism seeks to resolve the tension between the religion's creative and redemptive moments by assigning each vocations to different gods, thereby irrevocably breaching the absolute distance negative theology posits between God and man. Gnosticism thus originates as a remodeling of God to make Him answerable to a human intellectual need (of reconciling His power with His goodness).

The other elements of Gnosticism that have been historically significant are linked with this irrevocable breaching of distance between God and man. Gnosticism emphasizes that salvation come from cultivation of esoteric knowledge of spiritual truth, whose content has the effect of rendering God answerable to rational human needs. The secret knowledge attained by gnostic initiates has to do with being privy to God's design for the world — of being able to reconcile conflicting strands in the cosmic apparatus through the abrogation of the metaphysical distance between God and man. Penetrating this secret knowledge often leads to assigning a God-like role to those who have attained gnosis, and is the basis for establishing a rigid demarcation between an initiated elite and the uninitiated masses.

Negative theology may be illustrated by a quotation from the Psalms[2] and from Maimonides. "That they may know that it is your Name

1. Hans Blumenberg, *The Legitimacy of the Modern Age*, tr. by Robert M. Wallace (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1983), Parts I and II.
2. Psalms 83:19.

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Hashem alone, the Most High over all the earth." The formulation of the Psalmist becomes paradigmatic for Maimonides, who says: "Knowledge of the Name is apprehension of Him,"[3] i.e., man cannot pierce beyond the Name, can never be even conceptually in contact on a literal level with what the Name names. The categorical contrast between negative theology and Gnosticism is expressed in a set of metaphors in the famous account in the Book of Kings of Elijah's private reception of revelation on Mount Sinai: "And He [God] said: 'Go forth, and stand upon the mount before the Lord.' And behold, the Lord passed by, and a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and broke in pieces the rocks before the Lord; but the Lord was not in the wind; and after the wind was an earthquake; but the Lord was not in the earthquake. And after the earthquake a fire; but the Lord was not in the fire; and after the fire a still small voice."[4]

Gnosticism is personified by wind, earthquake, and fire — all symbols of bringing God down to earth and making him recognizable and thereby accountable to man. Negative theology is symbolized by "a still small voice." The literal translation of the Hebrew "*kol demamah dakah*" would be "a sound of thin silence." In his gloss on this phrase, Rashi says that it refers to "the voice that comes from the silence and one does not hear the voice itself."[5] Apparently, for Rashi it is only echoes of the silence — human projections stimulated by the unmitigated silence — that conjure up God. Given the insurmountable conceptual and ontological distance separating man from God, man can only relate to God by endlessly projecting Him, i.e., by engaging in limitless fabrications of metaphors.

Negative theology leads to toleration of metaphor and to recognition of the inherently metaphorical nature of language. The verbal currency of human life is approximations. Man never gets to "the real thing." From a negative theological perspective, ordinary linguistic usage accomplishes an important socializing function by normalizing the lack of closure in the concepts and descriptions that one applies to experience. Gnosticism has the opposite effect. It induces a festering impatience with the compromises and limitations encapsulated in ordinary linguistic usage. To resort to language is already to surrender to the sleazy, second-rate character of human life that is experienced now only in mediated form through a series of

3. Moses Maimonides, *Guide of the Perplexed*, tr. by Shlomo Pines (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1963), Part III, Chapter 51, p. 627.

4. First Kings 19:11, 12. This is the Jewish Publication Society translation contained in Kings, tr. by I. W. Slotki (London: Soncino Press, 1950).

5. *Ibid*. My translation.

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words that can only distort and deflect from (and, in a whole host of other ways, can only imperfectly reflect) the urgencies of immediate experience. The gnostic wants wind, earthquake, and fire. He wants to be overwhelmingly riveted by the actuality of his experience. The distancing and mediating mechanisms of human life taint it for him beyond recall.

Nazi Germany was the epitome of a society that had a radical revulsion against metaphors. In other societies, and in Germany at other times, if one calls someone vermin, a louse, or a leech it is perceived by the other and often also by the person saying it to be an expression of extreme annoyance or impatience. These words often constitute ways of "letting off steam" that then prod both the person expressing annoyance and the target of his annoyance to realign their behavior as a prelude to restoration of normal relations. In the gnostic atmosphere that pervaded Germany during the Nazi era, if Jews were vermin they needed to be exterminated. The safety valves of language that normally protect people from the extremes of human behavior had been obliterated through the gnostic purging of metaphor.

This dichotomy of negative theology versus gnosticism intersects with Giorgio Agamben's reading of the Shoah.[6] He makes the Nazis' obsessive preoccupation with "bare life" or what he calls, following Michel Foucault, "biopolitics," central to his interpretation. Through their organization of the various Jewish ghettoes around Europe, the Nazis pushed masses of people to this level. In their ghastly medical experiments on humans, they seemed to be driven by a desire to arrive at an objective bio-chemical translation of what constitutes bare life. In the monumentally destructive apparatus of the extermination camps, they simultaneously seemed riveted on scientifically isolating, destroying, and mocking bare life.

Agamben regards as central Carl Schmitt's "paradox of sovereignty,"[7] which bears an uncanny resemblance to paradoxes surrounding negative theology and skepticism. These three paradoxes exhibit a common logical structure. The "paradox of sovereignty" (in Agamben's paraphrase) goes as follows: "I, the sovereign, who am outside the law, declare that there is nothing outside the law."[8] But one must guard against a tempting misunderstanding. The paradox does not refer to the ongoing life of a political society, where the sovereign very plausibly and consistently can at times come under the provenance of the law and at times fall outside it. For

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6. Giorgio Agamben, *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*, tr. by Daniel Heller-Roazen (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998).
7. *Ibid.*, pp.15-29.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 15.

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example, the American President enjoys privileges and immunities that are denied other citizens, but he is still not authorized to license break-ins (as in the case of Nixon) of other citizens' private property when it suits his purposes. Schmitt's paradox refers to the moment of institution, when the sovereign's (be it a single person or a group) relation to his handiwork (i.e., how the simultaneous inside-outside relation between the sovereign and sovereignty can be sustained) defies coherent expression.

The tenets of negative theology exhibit an intramural tension between its various components similar to the "paradox of sovereignty." Negative theology wants to limit human comprehension of God to a disowning of the literal import of the attributes ascribed to Him — it wants desperately to preclude rational relating to God in any other sense. Yet, on some level, that deeply challenges analytical plotting. God has to be postulated in more than a negative sense, because otherwise there is nothing to disown. Just like the sovereign in relation to sovereignty, God in more than a negative sense is both undermined and presupposed by the tenets of negative theology. Analogously, like the sovereign and God, skepticism is both inside and outside its respective definition. Being skeptical of everything challenges the ability to adhere even to skepticism.

These paradoxes point to how language ends up chasing itself, rendering problematic any claims about a transparent, immediately compelling relation between words and reality. The paradoxes highlight the limits of language as an unproblematic transmitter of reality, and thereby lend indirect support to the thesis concerning the quasi-autonomous function of words — of the under-determination of words by things. Congruent with this is the subliminal awareness of the convergence and continuity between Western monotheistic religion and Western skepticism — of how paradoxical and futile is the Western "progression" from religion to modernity. The Nazi's destructive obsession with bare life was their way of rebelling against the inextricability of this situation, by destructively locating "bare life" as the secure focal point beyond the endless paraphrases of language.

According to Agamben, the Nazi extermination of the Jews during the Shoah represents a modern enactment of the archaic Roman legal institution of *homo sacer*, who may be killed, but not sacrificed. Thus, the killing "constitutes . . . neither capital punishment nor a sacrifice, but simply the actualization of a 'mere capacity to be killed' inherent in the condition of the Jew as such. The truth . . . is that the Jews were exterminated not in a mad and giant holocaust [a term which harbors a sacrificial aura], but exactly as Hitler had announced, 'as lice,' which is to say, as bare life. The

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dimension in which the extermination took place is neither religion nor law, but biopolitics."[9] For Agamben, the archaic Roman legal category of *homo sacer* encodes how the non-rationalizable character of the exception (in the case of *homo sacer*, the person consigned to this category is viewed as neither human nor divine, neither properly alive nor properly deprived of life) immediately devolves into a bare biopolitical entity as the unmarked "exit" out of his unchartable metaphysical status. Invocation of the Roman archaism of *homo sacer* becomes emblematic of all the unrationalizable exceptions that have defeated (from the vantage point of "enlightened" German consciousness) both Western religion and Western secularism — both Western tradition and Western liberation. The Jew apparently is singled out as the appropriate "sacrificial" target for this set of interlocking metaphysical disappointments, because he is the announcer and harbinger of negative theology in the world, which in a key sense provides the primal conceptual material that becomes encoded again and again in paradoxes.

The irony here is that simply because the Greeks had one word for "bare life" (*zoe*) and another for human life (*bios*) does not prove the existence of the former, but only the problematic and contradictory character of the concept. If one is theorizing bare biological life, rather than merely experiencing it (whatever that might mean), then it is more than bare biological life. One has to be situated at some point beyond it in order to have the concept. More likely than not, the concept of "bare life" emerges as a foil to the concept of human life as appropriate for a human being in order to give this latter concept relevance. To get at this point from a slightly different angle (logically, rather than sociologically), there is a lurking issue of reflexivity here. If one were merely experiencing "bare life," one could not theorize it — one could not designate it as a specific concept. The theorized notion of "bare life" has already surpassed "bare life."[10]

It might be possible to neutralize these paradoxes, but only at the expense of heightening the skepticism, whose key premise is the underdetermination of theory by fact (of words by things). How does Agamben account for the transition from the sovereign ban (or exception) to the savage biopolitical focus of the Nazi regime? There are two possibilities, and in a certain sense they are interconnected. The first has to do with the

9. Agamben, *Homo Sacer*, *op. cit.*, p. 114.

10. This is reminiscent of Nietzsche: "Even in the concept of 'immediate knowledge,' which theoreticians permit themselves, I sensed a *contradictio in adjecto*." See Friedrich Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, tr. by Walter Kaufmann (New York: Random House, 1966), p. 224.

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literalizing of metaphor. Schmitt's "paradox of sovereignty" occurs on the level of language — as one seeks to delimit in words how the actual institution of the political ruler (the sovereign) can be conceived of as falling both inside (for purposes of evoking his compliance) and outside (for purposes of warding off an infinite regress in accounting for how sovereignty came to be established) the institution he sets up. The point made earlier, that the paradox focuses on the "moment of institution," is still logically vulnerable. Its vulnerability becomes manifest when considering why the paradox is not immediately "given" or generated by the notion of sovereignty, but results from an act of conceptual "slicing." If one enlarges the framework of analysis, a paradox does not have to result. If one considers both the institution of sovereignty and its effects, then "institution" requires or presupposes an instituter, and the effects which become apparent later in time than the moment of institution can encompass the instituter as well as the other members of society. If one enlarges the horizon of analysis to include how sovereignty operates once it is established, as well as the process of establishment, then there is nothing inconsistent in noting that the sovereign has to precede sovereignty at the moment of institution, while coming under its rubric once it is established. Schmitt's paradox emerges only if one "cuts" the horizon of analysis much more narrowly. If one focuses exclusively on the moment of institution, then it looks like the sovereign is both "inside" and "outside" sovereignty — that his situation is paradoxical. However, a decision is present not only where Schmitt and Agamben say it is in order to arrest the infinite regress associated with the concept of sovereignty, but also in delineating the infinite regress and its impact that gives rise to the paradox. If one "cuts" the topic at a later stage in its unfolding, there is no paradox. If one "cuts" sovereignty at the moment of institution, then one confronts the paradox. There has to be a decision in order to have a problem in the first place — and not just to devise a solution for it.

The fact that there is a choice involved in initially situating the problem suggests that the language of problem-identification (and not just the vocabulary involved in spinning a resolution) is metaphoric., i.e., it does not reflect a situation that exists independently. Keeping this in mind, Agamben can be understood as going in either one of two interrelated ways in pointing to biopolitics as a way out of the paradox. The human hunger for contact with reality makes one impatient with metaphor. Constructing a politics whose stock in trade is bare biological life engenders the illusion that through its means one can redeem oneself from the sway of metaphor. A second, apparently more sophisticated way of making this point would

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be to say that "bare life" is the only category that has an immediate, unproblematic referent to something outside itself, and thus becomes the arch-redemptive category in politics. Since one has access to "bare life" only through the vocabulary one employs to refer to it, the second formulation appears *prima facie* to be more sustainable than the first, but is also vulnerable to the charge of "under-determination."

Aside from the "paradox of sovereignty," the problematizing of the specification of the paradox — not just of the finding of solutions to resolve it — is applicable to the other two paradoxes. With regard to the paradox surrounding the formulation of the tenets of negative theology, it also emerges only when one restricts the focus of space-time to concentrate on the moment of formulation. But, if one expands the spatial/temporal horizon to encompass postulation of and belief in an utterly transcendent deity, as well as a description of the anti-literalist character of this belief, then one can plausibly adhere to one's postulation of an inscrutable God *and* a specifying of the ways (expressed in one's theorizing of the tenets of negative theology) in which His inscrutability becomes evident.

Analogously, with regard to the paradox surrounding the formulation of the tenets of extreme skepticism, if one expands one's spatial/temporal horizon beyond the moment of formulation of these tenets to encompass the completed statement itself and the intellectual context in which it is situated, then the consistent outcome that emerges is that the furthest one can go in the direction of skepticism — of doubting everything — is in not being skeptical about skepticism, in not doubting the validity of doubt. To emerge with a paradox one would have to restrict the conceptual slicing to the moment of formulation, and cut oneself off from awareness of a broader slice that would enable one to incorporate the consequences of the formulation within the formulation. Again, to have the paradox is the result of an antecedent choice or decision about where to conceptually "cut" one's focus.

By questioning the viability of the "paradox of sovereignty" and its cognates, extreme skepticism in the form of the under-determination of theory by fact has become even more strengthened. Whether there is a paradox in these three cases or not depends on the choices one makes in reading them, and this only reinforces skepticism. Thus, the fashioning of a redemptive biopolitics centering around "bare life" seems even more compelling than in Agamben's original presentation. However, the overall persuasiveness of Agamben's argument is marred by his too sweeping reading of the scope of the connection between linguistic opacity and

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biopolitics and his under-appreciation of the subtle variations that can be wrought upon skepticism to fortify it against devolution into biopolitics in societies with strong liberal-democratic cultural and political traditions.

Unlike Levinas, Agamben sees a preoccupation with biopolitics as linking liberal-democratic and fascist societies. He says that "the first recording of bare life as the new political subject is already implicit in the document that is generally placed at the foundation of modern democracy: the 1679 writ of *habeas corpus*."[11] He takes the emphasis on rights in liberal-democratic society to be symptomatic of its biopolitical bias, and regards the substantively-attenuated, procedurally-inflated image of liberal man emerging from classical social contract writers as another emblem of "bare life." The main theorist of philosophical liberalism, whom Agamben believes best encapsulates these connections, is Thomas Hobbes. He quotes the following passage from Hobbes's *De Cive*: "If we look at adult men and consider the fragility of the unity of the human body whose ruin marks the end of every strength, vigor, and force, and the ease with which the weakest man can kill the strongest man, there is no reason for someone to trust in his strength and think himself superior to others by nature. Those who can do the same things to each other are equals. And those who can do the supreme thing — that is, kill — are by nature equal among themselves."[12]

The inference Agamben draws from this paragraph is that "the great metaphor of Leviathan, whose body is formed out of all the bodies of individuals, must be read in this light. The absolute capacity of the subjects' bodies to be killed forms the new political body of the West."[13] Yet, there is something about the way that he understands the Hobbesian social contract that is evocative of a dramatically contrasting reading of both Hobbes and modern liberal society generally. He says that "all representations of the original political act as a contract or convention marking the passage from nature to the state in a discrete and definite way must be left wholly behind." What he means is that the "bare life" enshrined in the concept of the state of nature is not something left behind with the entry into the social contract, but that it "is continually operative in the civil state in the form of the sovereign decision." In other words, the "sovereign decision" and "bare life" are as indissolubly linked in liberal society as they are in fascism —

11. Agamben, *Home Sacer*, *op. cit.*, p. 123.
12. Thomas Hobbes, *De cive: The Latin Version*, ed. by Howard Warrender (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983), p. 93; cited in Agamben, *Homo Sacer*, *op. cit.*, p. 123.
13. *Ibid.*

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with the epistemological irresolvability of sovereignty eventuating in a search for the irreducibly real ("bare life") in both political settings.

Agamben acknowledges that the correct way to read the transition from the state of nature to the establishment of the state in social contract theory is not as an historical accomplishment or a once-and-for-all achievement, but that the "state of nature" persists in the mature history of a liberal state in the sense that biological life generates the ongoing substance of sovereignty. He goes astray in envisioning the fugitiveness and precariousness of the state of nature ("Here there is, instead, a much more complicated zone of indecipherability between *nomos* and *physis*, in which the state tie, having the form of a ban, is always already also non-state and pseudo-nature, and in which nature always already appears as *nomos* and the state of exception")[14] as resulting from the need to continually extend the sovereign decision — as if sovereignty were as unquestioned a fact in liberal society as it is in a fascist state. For Agamben, the imagery and argument of the social contract capture the need for the continual assertion of unlimited sovereignty in the liberal state. But, the proper way to theorize liberalism is to see it as a body of ideas that emphasizes that sovereignty (and not just the stages of argument justifying it) remains incomplete throughout the whole life cycle of a liberal society.

A contractarian, liberal-democratic political community manages to circumvent the tie between sovereign power and "bare life," because the location of its sovereign is always provisional and always oriented toward the future. The point of the social contract (as Agamben emphasizes) is that its arguments summarize a thought experiment. But, contra Agamben, the thought experiment is not about the continual replenishment of the sovereign decision by "bare life," but about how sovereignty never comes fully to pass. The social contract constitutes a thought experiment that could potentially be engaged in by all the members in the life cycle of a society. Imaginatively, each member can project what life would be like outside of the centralized, coordinated framework of social interaction denoted by the term "government." The hypothetically-reconstructible affirmation of political authority during the course of the whole life span of a society constitutes the liberal-democratic translation of the notion of sovereignty. From this perspective, Locke's doctrine of tacit consent must be viewed as an extension of his theory of sovereignty — underscoring its incompleteness. As a citizen makes public moves that are sanctioned by

14. *Ibid.*, p. 109.

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the constitutional-legal system from which he benefits, the plausibility of the hypothetical reconstruction of acquiescence in the basic structure of society becomes enhanced — even while the institutionalization of sovereignty remains incomplete, awaiting further reconstructions of citizen acquiescence during the future course of society. From this perspective, sovereignty and political obligation come into existence and are fulfilled simultaneously, without either concept ever being exhaustively enacted.

Agamben's diagnosis of Nazism highlights its gnostic character by evincing how the "paradox of sovereignty" devolves on a savage surge against "bare life." But, collapsing his readings of Nazism and liberalism suggests that there is something gnostic in his pattern of argument. He seems insufficiently attentive to the subtle variations that may be spun on his paradoxes by conceptually slicing them later, rather than earlier (not at the moment of formulation, but when context and consequences may be taken more fully into account) and thereby re-configuring them as ordinary statements, i.e., non-paradoxes. The choice concerning how to configure one's statements only intensifies skepticism, making it necessary to translate it into its only consistent version as a generalized agnosticism, which staves off firm connection with any worldly reality, including "bare life." In tandem with this generalized agnosticism, which he overlooks, Agamben also misses the ways in which classical liberal thought may be construed as endlessly deferring sovereignty. The life of the liberal state may be viewed as coterminous with a continuing succession of reconstructed affirmations of political obligation, which provisionally justify sovereignty without making the state sovereign in any ultimate sense. When Agamben explores underlying affinities between Heidegger's philosophy and Nazism (via the medium of a long citation from an essay by Levinas), it is ironic that he accuses both Heidegger and Nazism of being excessively enamored of facticity — too preoccupied with the gnostic abrogation of distance — without noticing that he himself has succumbed to the temptations of facticity as previously described.

"The great novelty of Heidegger's thought," Agamben writes, "was that it resolutely took root in facticity. As publication of the lecture courses from the early 1920s has by now shown, ontology appears in Heidegger from the very beginning as a hermeneutics of factual life. The circular structure by which *Dasein* is an issue for itself in its ways of Being is nothing but a formalization of the essential experience of real life, in which it is impossible to distinguish between life and its actual situation, Being and its ways of Being, and for which all the distinctions of

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traditional anthropology (such as those between spirit and body, sensation and consciousness, I and world, subject and properties) are abolished."In opposition to his teacher Edmund Husserl's central category of facticity as contingency, Heidegger theorizes facticity as fallenness, "which characterizes a Being that is and has to be its own ways of Being."[15]

Heidegger's commitment to a facticity gnostically conceived as fallenness, rather than negatively-theologically projected as contingency, lies in the immediate background of his famous depiction of man's collective nightmare as consisting not only in "forgetting Being," but also in "forgetting the forgetting." For Heidegger, the central problem is "how to respond to Nietzsche — not to the possibility that we may never know the truth, but that we may no longer know what to make of our desire for truth, and thus how to think a 'form of life' constructed neither around true principles nor about the absence or impossibility of true principles, without finding ourselves in the world of normative technology or sheer will to power."[16] Heidegger affirms the facticity of post-modernist sensibility and culture, which posits itself as being beyond skepticism, without sufficiently taking into account how the normative issue of reflexivity (of consistency) may be raised with regard to this facticity, thereby rendering it more unstable and precarious than it would be without this normative hook-up. A post-skeptical facticity raises the specter of a skepticism so complete that it has lost track of itself as skepticism. Nevertheless, the traces of the older vocabulary that form perhaps the deepest strata in the new terminology connoting supersession provide a haunting link with the inarticulate question concerning the consistency of this position: How can one be skeptical of everything without also being skeptical of skepticism?

Skepticism understood as generalized agnosticism constitutes the best set of counter-moves for staving off the Heideggerian nightmare of "forgetting the forgetting." By emphasizing the lack of secure foundations for beliefs and utterances, skepticism enhances responsibility for the choices of epistemological and metaphysical categories. Encoded in a generalized agnosticism (a concept of evolving time in which the returns pertinent to any domain of inquiry are never fully in) is an ethic

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15. Agamben, *Homo Sacer*, *op. cit.*, p. 150.

16. Frederick Dolan, "Comments on Aryeh Botwinick's *Skepticism, Belief, and the Modern: Maimonides to Nietzsche*, delivered at "Roundtable on Aryeh Botwinick's *Skepticism, Belief, and the Modern: Maimonides to Nietzsche*," held at the Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association in Atlanta, Georgia (September 2-5, 1999).

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of remembering: Perhaps the past will return, perhaps tradition (in the particular and the general sense) will be reconstituted, perhaps Being will be rendered whole. There is a lurking issue of reflexivity in Heidegger's formulation. If one must theorize the forgetting of the forgetting, then nothing is properly forgotten. This residual issue of reflexivity suggests that Heidegger is still caught in the dynamic of the Western past — including its skeptical past.

Hölderlin, in *Hyperion or the Hermit in Greece*, strikingly captures the sense in which skeptical narrative constitutes the best form of remembrance: "Believe me, the skeptic finds contradiction and imperfection in all that is thought, because he knows the harmony of perfect beauty, which is never thought. The dry bread that human reason well-meaningly offers him he disdains only because he is secretly feasting at the table of the gods."[17] Skepticism highlights the not fully realized unity in the statements and arguments being examined, so as to better preserve an untarnished vision of unity in the realm of the ideal. A strong impetus behind skepticism is to prevent the ideal from being diminished by emphasizing its not being fully realized in the actual. Paradoxically, one important effect of focusing on the skeptical limitations of sentences and arguments is to enlarge the distance between the actual and the ideal, thereby augmenting the sanctity of the latter. In this crucial sense, the vocabulary of skepticism is therapeutic for a skeptically-delineated ethic of remembrance.

The under-determination of theory by fact (which Heidegger's "forgetting the forgetting" is not totally able to efface) ensures that affixing terms to things is not just a matter of descriptively applying the right word, but (given the ontological gap between words and things) of normatively affirming its appropriateness as well. Given the under-determination of words by things, distance (such as that surrounding the normative-descriptive distinction) is built into the order of facticity, superseding and subverting the homogenous compactness that seems to prevail on the surface. Paradoxically, by "overcoming" skepticism Heidegger ensures that Being will be forgotten. His descriptive analyses and prescriptive categories mesh and share a common fate. They rise and fall together.

Agamben quotes Levinas' 1934 essay where he focuses on the expunging of all distances as the constitutive feature of Nazism. According to Levinas, Nazism represents the incorporation by the self of a charismatic

17. An epigraph to Robert Bernasconi's article in Robert Bernasconi and Simon Critchley, eds., *Re-Reading Levinas* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991), p. 149.

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source of certainty situated in biology and its imperatives.[18] The familiar human self, characterized by unbreachable distances whose reified expression is in the form of dichotomies between "spirit and body, sensation and consciousness, I and world, subject and properties"[19] and is presided over "by a sovereignly free self" that tries to establish momentary repose among its internal conflicting voices, is quashed in favor of a self that no longer experiences itself as a self with a relative degree of autonomy and distance, but rather as some manifestation or extension of necessity — a cannibalized appropriation of a charismatic source, where the inner and the outer have become one to such a degree that quantified expressions of unity and qualitative descriptions of it have ceased to be possible or to matter.

To the gnostic obliteration of distance in Nazism Levinas counterposes the unbridgeability of distance in liberalism: "In the world of liberalism, man is not weighed down by a History in choosing his destiny. He does not experience the possibilities open to him as a series of restless powers that seethe within him and already push down a determined path. For him, they are only logical possibilities that present themselves to a dispassionate reason that makes choices while forever keeping its distance."[20] His commitment to negative theology is as forceful as his commitment to liberalism, and the two are linked. Elsewhere, Levinas says: "For the relation between the being here below and the transcendent being that results in no community of concept or totality — a relation without relation — we reserve the term religion."[21] Implicit in this definition is a concept of God as being totally uncontainable and non-referable in literal theological vocabulary — a God of whom one can say that one's relation to Him consists of "a relation without relation." Levinas describes "the idea of infinity" — "the metaphysical relation" — as "the dawn of a humanity without myths. But faith purged of myths, the monotheist faith, itself implies metaphysical

18. "The importance attributed to this feeling for the body, with which the Western spirit has never wished to content itself, is at the basis of a new concept of man. The biological, with the notion of inevitability it entails, becomes more than an object of spiritual life. It becomes its heart. The mysterious urges of the blood, the appeals of heredity and the past for which the body serves as an enigmatic vehicle, lose the character of being problems that are subject to a solution put forward by a sovereignly free self." See Emmanuel Levinas, "Quelques reflexions sur la philosophie de l'Hitlerisme," in *Esprit* 26 (1934), pp. 205-7; cited in Agamben, *op. cit.*, pp. 151-52.

19. Agamben, *Homo Sacer*, *op. cit.*, p. 150.

20. Emmanuel Levinas, "Reflections on the Philosophy of Hitlerism," tr. by Sean Hand, in *Critical Inquiry* 17 (Autumn 1990), p. 66.

21. Emmanuel Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, tr. by Alphonso Lingis (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1969), p. 80.

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atheism." He then goes on to qualify this statement in ways that suggest that his position is more nearly akin to agnosticism, rather than to atheism: "Atheism conditions a veritable relation with a true God. But this relation is as distinct from objectification as from participation. To hear the divine word does not amount to knowing an object; it is to be in relation to a subject overflowing its own idea in me, overflowing what Descartes calls its objective existence. When simply known, thematized, the substance no longer is 'according to itself'."[22]

Apparently, according to Levinas, in relating to God, one might be relating to "a true God," but a God, nevertheless, who cannot be "simply known" or "thematized." In other words, for the authentic believer, the question of God's existence is kept persistently open. The imagery of negative theology is captured most fully by the following two sentences: "A distance more precious than contact, a non-possession more precious than possession, a hunger that nourishes itself not with bread but with hunger itself."[23] "To be expressed by one's life, by one's works, is precisely to decline expression."[24] For relating to God in a negative theological vein, the "syntax" of relation is distance. Even though one cannot abridge the distance in any given moment of prayerful recognition or introspective acknowledgement of the insurmountable distance that separates man from God, mapping an ever-expanding metaphysical middle becomes the most authentic negative-theological way of praying and relating to God. The second sentence cited above conjures up the image of how the typical negative theological distinction between knowing God through what He does (the actions attributed to Him) and knowing what He is like in and for Himself (whereby the former knowledge is available to man, but not the latter) is a distinction without a difference. Since negative theology debars man from tracing from actions to a doer in a literal sense, the divine vocabulary of action remains as inscrutable as the divine vocabulary of knowledge.

Levinas's commitment to negative theology means that infinity has to be translated as horizontal rather than as vertical transcendence. Since one is not able to ascertain that one literally gets to God, "infinity" necessarily refers to an endless succession of human presents in which the question of God's existence is kept alive. That Levinas understands infinity as horizontal transcendence is reinforced by his statement that transcendence or

22. *Ibid.*, p. 77.
23. *Ibid.*, p. 179.
24. *Ibid.*, p. 176.

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"goodness is produced as pluralism."[25] Presumably, "pluralism" refers not only to multiple selves, but to multiple presents in which they are situated. In the context of explicating his notion of pluralism, Levinas invokes the concept of "an infinite time."[26] His concept of horizontal transcendence as situating man in a generalized-agnostic stance in relation to a continually unfolding future not only extends to the passage of time as a whole, but to each instant of time considered in its own right.[27]

Levinas theorizes the self in the same generalized-agnostic manner that he conceives of God.[28] He does not theorize the self as an enduring substratum that in consonance with its identity spawns actions that cohere with it, but rather as an entity whose contours are only grasped (let alone fixed) provisionally and retrospectively. Not only is personal identity after the fact, but works (and one might be able to extrapolate broader actions as well) have the status of semi-autonomous events that "have to be deciphered" without the assistance of the worker concerned. Levinas says pointedly that, if the worker participates in deciphering his own work, "he speaks" — as if to underscore that to interpret even one's own work constitutes a separate action beyond the original work, which does not necessarily confer on the worker any privileged status. Levinas envisions the world as supporting an ever-expanding metaphysical middle — the perfect correlative to a generalized agnosticism.[29]

It should now be clear why liberalism is the appropriate politics for Levinas' generalized-agnostic self and world. A central category in his

25. *Ibid.*, p. 305.
26. *Ibid.*, p. 306.
27. *Ibid.*, p. 238: "The identity of the present splits up into an inexhaustible multiplicity of possibles that suspend the instant. And this gives meaning to initiative, which nothing definitive paralyses, and to consolation — for how could one sole tear, though it be effaced, be forgotten, how could reparation have the least value, if it did not correct the instant itself, if it did not let it escape in its being, if the pain that glints in the tear did not exist 'pending,' if it did not exist with a still provisional being, if the present were consummated?"
28. *Ibid.*, p. 144: "For one cannot first posit an I and then ask if enjoyment and need run counter to it, limit it, injure it, or negate it: only in enjoyment does the I crystallize." *Ibid.*, p. 176: "In undertaking what I willed I realized so many things I did not will: the work rises in the midst of the wastes of labor. The worker does not hold in his hands all the threads of his own action. He is exteriorized by acts that are already in a sense abortive. If his works deliver signs, they have to be deciphered without his assistance. If he participates in this deciphering, he speaks."
29. *Ibid.*, p. 133: "Activity does not derive its meaning and its value from an ultimate and unique goal, as though the world formed one system of use-references whose term touches our very existence. The world answers to a set of autonomous finalities which ignore one another. To enjoy without utility, in pure loss, gratuitously, without referring to anything else, in pure expenditure — this is the human."

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thought is the "face," whose significance resides in its being a harbinger of horizontal transcendence: "Man is the site of transcendence."[30] The "face" forms part of a family of interrelated concepts that includes "fecundity," which he defines as "a situation in which the instant of eroticism and the infinity of paternity are conjoined."[31] Through fecundity, the time of the "I" becomes "an infinite time."[32] The "face" is emblematic of the unending series of discontinuities that pervade human life — of the multiple ways in which human efforts at full rational encompassing and emotional overtaking (in short, human efforts at totalization) are resisted by the eruption of the new, the unexpected, the disconcerting, the questioning, and the surprising, symbolized by the simultaneous plasticity and unfathomableness of the human face. The resistance to totalization and the enshrining of contingency as an organizing principle for comprehending human life symbolized by the face get further institutionalized by mechanisms of fecundity that become "the source of human time."[33] The elements of horizontal transcendence (or at least of anti-totality or anti-totalization) registered by the face become magnified when one has children. Reproducing oneself becomes the ultimate testimonial to the triumph of contingency — of horizontal transcendence. Replicating the circumstances in which one has not been able to move beyond the whirring discontinuities of life by begetting children who will be similarly situated fixes in a firm horizontal sense the transcendent character of human life and time.

The affirmation of horizontal transcendence leads to the embrace of a liberal politics. Levinas contrasts "the infinite time of fecundity" and those individuals nurtured under its aegis with the "heroic being that the state produces by its virile virtues."[34] He compares the discontinuities of the former personality-type with the rigidly imposed and enforced continuities of the latter, and identifies the human condition with the cultivation of the former. The "heroic being" assumes "finite time."[35] The "familial being" assumes "infinite time." Levinas theorizes the family as

30. Emmanuel Levinas, *The Levinas Reader*, ed. by Sean Hand (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1989), p. 205.
31. Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, *op. cit.*, p. 306.
32. *Ibid.*
33. *Ibid.*
34. *Ibid.*
35. *Ibid.*: "The family does not only result from a rational arrangement of animality; it does not simply mark a step toward the anonymous universality of the state. It identifies itself outside of the State even if the state reserves a framework for it."

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falling outside the state. In contrast to the state, which is the embodiment of totality, the family is linked with "infinity."

For individuals and families conceived in this way, the appropriate role for the state is to perform in narrowly circumscribed formal and instrumental ways. Through its formal aloofness and subordinate character, the properly self-restrained state ordains and protects a private sphere that enables individuals and families to pursue their private gambles with eternity. Most importantly from the perspective of Levinas' argument, a primary role of the negatively-constituted liberal state is to ensure that the infrastructure of a generalized agnosticism continues to function. The scheme of institutionalized deferrals of the liberal state, which in both a temporal and a spatial sense continually disperses sovereignty, truth, power, and justice, serves to underwrite the generalized agnosticism that is the only sustainable outcome of Levinas's metaphysical theorizing.

One can argue that negative theology in Levinas' thought not only helps to account for why the Shoah happened, but also provides the most fruitful theological perspective for responding to it. Levinas and Agamben converge in assigning a pivotal role to negative theology and its offshoots in Western skepticism and liberalism in triggering the unbounded impatience and colossal rage embodied in the Shoah. Western spiritual impulses originally expressed as negative theology and then re-articulated as skepticism and liberalism (conceived as institutionalized skepticism), remaining unfulfilled in all three guises, whet the gnostic appetite for overwhelming communion and thorough introjection, i.e., annihilation of one's object. For Levinas, what was at stake in Nazism was losing the sense of a "sovereignly free self." Nazism was about substituting gnostic embeddedness (in the body, in grisly projects centering around "bare life," in the charismatic redemptive potential of a Führer) for negative theological distance and freedom.

Evil of the order of magnitude perpetrated by the Nazis during the Shoah challenges the utmost resources of the human imagination. Levinas' approach to it is encapsulated in a very deep and moving formulation by Rav Simcha Zissel of Kelm: "Every question that is especially strong and does not have a solution, then the question itself is (becomes) the solution." The question posed by and embodied in Nazi satanic destructiveness was the question of the theoretical irresolvability of negative theology and its philosophical and political offshoots. The solution for Levinas becomes a reinstatement of the problem. Underscoring the negative theological understanding of God, Levinas says: "Here I believe we see the specific face of

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Judaism: the link between God and man is not an emotional communion that takes place within the love of a God incarnate, but a spiritual or intellectual [*esprits*] relation which takes place through an education in the Torah. It is precisely a word, not incarnate, from God that ensures a living God among us."[36] Equally emphatically, as a kind of credo of his own, Levinas says: "Spirituality is offered up not through a tangible substance, but through absence. God is real and concrete not through incarnation but through Law, and His greatness is not inspired by His sacred mystery."[37]

An additional factor that leads Levinas to identify negative theology as the "solution" to the problem posed by the Shoah is his sense that it is necessary to locate the Shoah squarely within the human repertoire of responses, so as to build hedges against its recurrence. If one regards it as a bizarre theological anomaly, one is unable to cultivate proper measures against its possible reoccurrence. In any event, all of history — including the Shoah — constitutes a seamless negative theological web. What negative theology conjures up for Levinas is an endless string of irresolvable metaphors and paraphrases — "an alternating rhythm of the said and the unsaid, and the unsaid being unsaid in its turn, [which] will have to be substituted for the unity of discourse."[38] In the end, the faith of a Jew comprehended and uttered in good faith is that "The awaiting of the Messiah is the duration of time itself."[39]

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36. He cites as his motto Yossel Rakover's negative theological credo: "I love him, but I love even more his Torah. . . . And even if I were deceived by him and became disillusioned, I should nevertheless observe the precepts of the Torah."Emmanuel Levinas, "Loving the Torah more than God," in Levinas, *Difficult Freedom: Essays on Judaism*, tr. by Sean Hand (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990), p. 144.

37. *Ibid.*, p. 145.

38. Emmanuel Levinas, *Collected Philosophical Papers*, tr. by Alphonso Lingis (Dordrecht: Martinus Nijhoff, 1987), p. 173.

39. Emmanuel Levinas, "Revelation in the Jewish Tradition," in Levinas, *The Levinas Reader*, *op. cit.*, p. 203.

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European Responses to September 11

Russell A. Berman

The following articles represent a range of responses, largely European, to the Sept. 11 attacks and the subsequent events. However, the selection is not intended to document the full spectrum of European opinion or even to survey a random kaleidoscope of reactions. Rather, these responses to the attacks and to the Afghan War reveal that, beneath the surface of international support and especially West European solidarity with American foreign policy, fundamental issues are emerging as new fault lines of dispute. Indeed, as commentaries on immediate events, parts of these analyses are already dated (the risk one takes in commenting on the news, although a risk that it is important to take). Thus, the insistence in several pieces that, like the Soviet Union before it, the US could only become bogged down in a hopeless counter-insurgency war, a new Vietnam in Afghanistan, reflects the hesitant public opinion of the autumn. By now, after the surprisingly rapid victories, the resilience of the Northern Alliance, the fall of the Taliban regime, and the apparently successful negotiations leading to a new Afghan government, that particular outcome seems unlikely. Despite expectations, the Russian fate in Afghanistan was not an ineluctable curse, which would befall the Americans as well. Needless to say, the commentators, especially in the European and American press, who predicted inevitable failure in the fall, have not found the time to reflect on their own miscalculations.

Similarly the pessimistic expectations that the Arab masses, from Morocco to Indonesia, would rise up in anger against the US and lead to a destabilization of many Arab regimes have proven equally untrue. One could furthermore note that the authors' fear of an Orwellian mind control disallowing any critical discussion has also turned out to be unwarranted: precisely such criticism has in fact led to an American slow down, at the very least, of the policy of incarcerating Taliban prisoners at Guantanamo, while John Walker Lindh, the Taliban fighter from Marin County, can appeal to claims for due process in order to forestall prosecution, belying the insistence on a seamlessly repressive state apparatus. When a prospective passenger at the San Francisco airport was found to have explosive powder on his shoes, he was able to escape into the crowd: hardly evidence of an oppressive police presence. There is, of course, every reason to oppose unnecessary extensions of state power; but the repeated suggestions that 1984 is already here just do not stand up to scrutiny. Critical discussion goes on unabated, due process expectations continue, and the security apparatus is as bumbling and inefficient as ever.

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Yet, no matter how much may be wrong with some of empirical claims in the pieces presented here, they are important because they present significant claims, which are of considerable interest for several reasons. First of all, they indicate that, just below the surface, the transatlantic solidarity after Sept. 11 is fraught with doubts, hesitations, and resentment. Despite the official European government policies to support US military action, and despite widespread public approval, as registered in public opinion polls (although some empirical observations would be useful, particularly with regard to differences among the various European populations), there are murmurs of discontent in many circles, which these essays articulate emphatically. Perhaps, it is in part a matter of the traditional European suspicion of American motives, or the different strategic positions, or a genuine clash of national interests, but it is at the very least well advised not to be blinded by the ostentatious show of support in official discourse. That support may be thinner than one imagines; it is not hard to imagine a context which could amplify the rumblings of opposition. Particularly if the American government intends to pursue an attack on the other states mentioned in Bush's State of the Union address, European opposition may become quite vocal.

However, that sort of speculation cannot be left to others; the concern here is not the tea-leaf reading about whether Europe will ever begin to act with a substantive and independent policy. Instead, these essays are important, because the Sept. 11 debate has turned into an opportunity for important reflections on the changing character of politics in the 21st century. The various pieces may be unconvincing as far as their empirical accounts may go, but they draw attention to important issues in political thought and the changing character of the international political system. Before turning to those points, however, it is useful to reflect on the long-term relation of this journal, and the intellectual tradition from which it emerges, to this sort of mixture of current politics and political theory.

Critical Theory does not have a particularly illustrious history of political acumen. It suffered from the legacy of Marxism, with its deep-seated inability to think through the "political" as a relatively autonomous sphere of society or to imagine the state as anything else than the executive committee of the bourgeoisie, i.e., solely as a vehicle for economic interests. For classical Marxism, the concern was primarily with the class-character of individual political decisions, rather than with the character of political power and its deployment. That sort of theme was broached outside of Critical Theory, narrowly defined, in the work of thinkers such as Hannah Arendt and Carl Schmitt, and it is from them that Habermas developed his early concern with the blurring of the social and the political: to what extent does the state retain its ability to act, as it increasingly becomes the administrator of social policies? The expansion of the political into the social runs the risk of diminishing the specifically political character of the state, its capacity to make decisions. If, for Schmitt, sovereignty depended on the ability to decide on the state of exception, the modern

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state in liberal democracies seemed to be sliding toward an immobility of regulation and juridification. The tension between the capacity for political action and the exigencies of bureaucratic "government" informed studies of the Nazi state, particularly with regard to questions of the relation between the state and the party. Parallel questions were raised with regard to the Soviet state, especially in the leftist critique of the party domination of the state.

The classical Critical Theory of Horkheimer and Adorno is, of course, not at all devoid of political dimensions. From Horkheimer's "Authoritarian State" to their co-authored *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, a vision of the expansive, encompassing, and ultimately totalitarian state emerges. The expansive state, however, may undermine its own capacity to act politically, while — at another level of political thought — the individual citizen ends up as merely an epiphenomenon of underlying forces: a client, or a conformist, and, in any case, devoid of a capacity to act. The ultimate result is therefore a sort of double depoliticization: as the state becomes increasingly administrative, the citizen abdicates any civic courage, sliding into ever-greater passivity. Despite Critical Theory's willingness to equate, hyperbolically, the New Deal state with fascism and Stalinism as variants of a "totally administered society," when faced with practical political questions Horkheimer and Adorno and most of their Frankfurt School colleagues were nevertheless quite able to understand that important differences separated the democratic West from the socialist East during the Cold War. The anti-communism of Adorno's essay on Lukács, "Extorted Reconciliation" (1958), and his polemic against Brecht and Sartre, "Engagement" (1962), are well known, and indicate how Critical Theory moved out of a narrow left-wing subculture and toward the mainstream of political opinion in West Germany.[1]

Yet, unlike this evidence, drawn from the sometimes abstruse and hermetic discourse of aesthetic philosophy, a document of August 1950 attributed to both Horkheimer and Adorno and only recently published makes their political orientation clear with an exceptional lack of ambiguity. Entitled "The USSR and the Peace," it evidently represents a draft of a response to a request from a peace organization to lend their support to an absolute ban on atomic weapons. It was the era of the burgeoning Cold War, the establishment of socialist regimes in Eastern Europe and growing communist influence in the West. Critical Theory's allegiance is clear:[2] "It is an expression of the intractable and blind situation, heading toward absolute horror, that it can turn the truth into a lie, when it is put to the service of a lie. The peace appeal and the condemnation of atomic weapons are a piece of Soviet propaganda with the intention to misuse humane sentiments in order to break

1. See Peter Uwe Hohendahl, *Prismatic Thought: Theodor W. Adorno* (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1995), p. 44.

2. See Wolfgang Kraushaar, ed., *Frankfurter Schule und Studentenbewegung: Von der Flaschenpost zum Molotowcocktail 1946-1995* (Hamburg: Rogner and Bernhard, 1998), Vol. II, p. 51.

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the resistance against the violence that comes from the Soviet Union. It would not refrain from unleashing a war if the violent rulers in Moscow thought they could win it. The yearning for peace, shared by all peoples, is being used to gain time for the new totalitarian enterprise." While not an elaborate political theory by any means, the short draft is nonetheless interesting: both as a clarification of Critical Theory's explicit anti-communism — which would of course attract the wrath of a New Left unable to rid itself of its own pro-communist bias — and as a commentary on the degradation of political life in general. For Horkheimer and Adorno, politics was rapidly losing its erstwhile substantive character and turning into a mere vehicle for interstate conflict. That account resembles in some ways the much more elaborate theory of the culture industry: the degradation of politics tracks the commodification of aesthetic culture. Still, this political theory remains exceptional within Critical Theory: Adorno's work culminates with his *Aesthetic Theory*, and he never writes a major work on politics, despite intermittent comments.

Reference to Critical Theory's background is pertinent here with regard to the history of *Telos* and political questions. Concerned fundamentally with philosophical and social matters — and especially the transfer of European "theory" into the American context — the journal has nonetheless regularly addressed contemporary political matters, translating documents and European comments as well as attempting to generate independent, theoretically informed commentary. Beginning in the 1970s, the journal published material from East European and Russian dissident circles as part of the then on-going reevaluation of Marxism, including Western Marxism. If that discussion alone put *Telos* on a collision course with liberal and Left opinion, never willing to break with the Soviet Union, the tension came to a head after 1982 in the debate over the then current peace movement, engaged in opposition to the stationing of American cruise missiles in Western Europe. Some questions, such as the nature of American hegemony, the "community of values" between the US and Europe, and differing strategic positions anticipate aspects of the current discussion about the Afghan War. There are more obvious links between the subsequent chapter in this history, the Gulf War discussions of 1991, and today: relations to the Islamic world, the character of the exercise of American military power, and the significance of oil.

More than half a century separates Horkheimer and Adorno's comments on the Soviet peace initiative and the responses to Sept. 11: half a century of Critical Theory facing politics, especially foreign policy matters. At the beginning of the period, political discussions were framed by the bipolar world; if the Left opposition to Western and especially American policy was frequently more than what Horkheimer and Adorno saw as the communist fronts in 1950, the overdetermination of the Left by the Cold War and, especially, Soviet interests was a non-negligible factor in political debates until 1990. It remains to be seen whether a Western Left can develop an independent (foreign) political vision, after the collapse of the Soviet Union and, especially, after the integration of Russia under Putin into the

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American-led Western coalition. In general, the predisposition of the Left to identify with anti-Western regimes, regardless of their nearly constant unsavory character, suggests the persistence of a taste acquired during the Cold War. Similarly, the hostility to development and market economies points to a communist orientation in the post-communist world: better state planning and poverty than the production of wealth through the market. Thus, even after the fall of the Berlin Wall and the collapse of the Soviet Union, a classic leftism persists and therefore also the potential for a significant difference between a political analysis informed by Critical Theory and by the Left — even though, as is clear in some of the following essays, the distinction between Right and Left continues to lose credibility.

In the discussion of Sept. 11, one cannot help but notice a glaring absence and its consequences: a considered examination of the events on the individual level, either in terms of the ethical issues at stake or the individual psychologies at work. Critical Theory's exaggerated claims about the disappearance of individuality (which it regretted) are not at all far from the poststructuralist hostility to individual subjectivity (the alleged demise of which it applauds). Intellectual life at the beginning of the 21st century is not particularly interested in the individual, and particularly not in the character of individual political action. Reflecting the particular bias of the "New Class" and bureaucratic structures of administration, this occlusion of the individual as a political actor is quite at odds with, e.g., the discourse of anarchism in the late 19th century, which shares with Sept. 11 the focus on the violent political deed, if on a very different quantitative level. Anarchism once thematized the conflict between the pained subjectivity, the inner life, of the actor and the established order. Moreover, political questions concerning 20th century totalitarianism repeatedly focused on the questions at stake for the individual engaged in politics and therefore at the painful point of conflict between personality and state power.

On the Left, these problems were presented classically in Brecht's *The Measures Taken* or in Koestler's *Darkness at Noon*. For the Right (if the category is useful here), the problem is the Nazi era "just following orders," examined in a plethora of fictional and essayistic works. The conflict between the ethics of individual subjectivity and the immorality of *raison d'état* with regard to the CIA is even the topic of a current American popular film, *Spy Games*. Yet, none of that "micropolitical" analysis takes place in the current discussion of Sept. 11. Instead of asking about the ethics of the individual deed, the discussion moves immediately to the question of American foreign policy: as if both terrorists and their victims could be immediately subsumed to their respective political sides, with no difficulty. The sole site of such reflection on matters of individual character involves negative judgments on Bush's designation of the terrorists as "cowards," which is typically rejected as inappropriate: how could they be cowards if they were willing to take their own lives?

Yet, that blithe rejoinder hardly answers the psychological question. Even those who reject the label of "cowards" for the Sept. 11 killers are reluctant to

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describe them as "brave," surely too positive a term. Were they courageous or bold? Certainly not, since it now appears that only the terrorists in the cockpits knew that a suicide mission was at stake; those involved in subduing the passengers did not know that they were bound to their death: they were duped by an apparatus which ignores the value of human life — an apparatus which the terrorists were stupid enough to trust. At the very least, one has to be able to say that it was a case of an enormous instrumentalization of human life. The terrorists in the cockpits, who knew they would die, were engaged in a massive act of violence, while also understanding that they would themselves be able to escape from having to confront the consequences of their killings. Given the magnitude of the deed, the suicidal component is all the more significant as an unethical evasion of responsibility; in contrast, one might understand bravery to mean taking a risk, while accepting to live with its consequences. "Cowardice" is surely more appropriate a designation for the Al Qaeda killers than its critics imagine: taking thousands of lives without the courage to take responsibility. In fact, suicide is ethically dubious in all cases, and in this one all the more so.

At the very least, the accusation of cowardice points to the necessity of a discussion on the individual level. It would be all the more important as a way to talk about the victims: the lost lives and — particularly with regard to questions of political action — the ability of some individuals to resist. What are the sources of strength for heroic action? Where do normal civilians find the courage to fight back? The question of Flight 93, the fourth plane on Sept. 11, which evidently was deflected from the terrorists' target by a passenger revolt, or the role of passengers in subduing the "shoe bomber" are key, but interestingly absent from the discussion, here and elsewhere. At stake is the point at which the standardized admonition against "taking the law into your own hands" runs into the urgency of self-defense. A discussion of vigilantism as a political phenomenon is waiting just below the surface. In any case, to raise the question of citizens' resistance would require an emphatic sense of individuality and responsibility, anathema both to the intellectual taste of postmodernism and the political taste of antiglobalism (hostile to categories associated with liberalism, including individuality).

Three overlapping clusters of ideas appear throughout the essays. The first involves the tension between local particularities, understood primarily in spatial terms, and overriding, supraregional processes: in economic terms, it is globalization, in philosophical terms, universalism; in politics, it is the external projection of American power or "imperialism." Each is, of course, a distinct term, and does not map easily or conclusively on the other. "Globalization" refers above all to the accelerated development of an international economic system, particularity under the aegis of neo-liberalism, while "universalism" indicates a mode of philosophical thought, as much associated with 18th century Enlightenment as with Platonic idealism. Several authors share basic categories, but with a range of evaluations. For Baudrillard, the cohesiveness of the system of globalization elicits its own

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opposition as a sort of law of the system. It is the "globe" that revolts against "globalization"; his phrasing suggests an underlying Heideggerianism, something like the "earth" resisting the "world." However, by transforming Sept. 11 into an abstract phenomenon that, fundamentally, has nothing to do with either the US or the Islamic world, he succumbs to the same logic of abstraction that he criticizes. Benoist also conveys a deep-seated suspicion of globalization as universalism, but with an added dimension: the repressiveness of the Taliban is part of that universalism Benoist derives from monotheism. Thus, the drama of the West versus the Taliban disappears into their shared religio-philosophical structuring. Against that homogenization, Benoist characteristically envisions a consistently federalist organization of politics and culture. Tarchi carries this idea further in his appeal for a rediscovery of European particularity, against the "planetary homogenization" associated with American culture. Minc takes the counterposition, but shares a related conceptual framework. At stake is the process of economic globalization, which he supports; hence, his recognition that the critical response to the Afghan War in fact is not about Afghanistan or Sept. 11. It is about anxieties regarding globalization and neoliberalism, which today are so deeply constitutive of European, and especially French political culture.

A starting point to work through these issues would involve recognizing the fundamental difference between globalization and universalism, even though they are collapsed, for polemical purposes, in some of the essays. Globalization refers to a current economic, political, and cultural process of transnational integration; universalism is a philosophical category, not necessarily implied by globalization. The critics of American political power and its projection around the world have a tendency to slide from a criticism of the US to a criticism of globalization and then to draw on the rhetorical strength of philosophical criticisms of universalism. The connection among the three is rarely convincing.

The second cluster of ideas pervading these essays involves transformations of the state, sovereignty and war in the current context, characterized by post-national formations and networks of economic and political power. Sept. 11 becomes a metaphor: by showing that even the US is vulnerable to an outside attack, the conclusion is drawn that national borders have become less important, even this particular border, the heretofore protected US. This denationalization is presumably proven again by the nature of the opponent: not another state involved in a classic inter-state conflict, but a non-state organization (the nightmare NGO?), itself with a decidedly international make-up. At least in some counts, Al Qaeda is not described as a hierarchical organization with a clear leadership — i.e., precisely not the "democratic centralism" of the communist parties of the past — but a post-modern "rhizome," a loose network which would thrive even if the presumed leadership were destroyed. Whether Al Qaeda turns out to be a disciplined, vertically organized structure or a loose horizontal network remains to be seen. The point is that it is taken to be representative of a new sort of political formation, which calls existing nation-state structures into question.

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Thus, in an argument that echoes Deleuze, Virillo, and especially Baudrillard, Benoist writes that: "The world has entered the era of networks. The new terrorists organizations are nothing else but one kind of network among others: banking and financial networks, industrial networks, information and communication networks, criminal networks, etc. . . . The state's status cannot but change once, as for criminal activities, it no longer controls business, communication as well as financial exchanges. The concept of national sovereignty, related to a specific territory, becomes meaningless. The transition from the modern age to the post-modern age corresponded to the world of nation-states, national borders and relatively enclosed territories to a world of continents, communities and territories." To be sure, Benoist suggests that this transition was long anticipated: in the blurring of the border between civilian and military victims in WWII and even in the role of irregular, guerilla fighters, i.e. precisely not the soldiers of a state, in the anti-Napoleonic Wars. This point underlies the current debate over the status of the Guantanamo prisoners: should they be treated as classical prisoners of war to which Geneva Conventions apply or are they something different; is existing international law, based as it is primarily on the existence of separate sovereign states, increasingly obsolete? Ulmen's discussion of the changing character of war sheds important light on this matter and gets to the fundamental issues at stake in the reconfiguration of political structures associated with war.

While Benoist treats Sept. 11 as a sign of the obsolescence of the nation-state, Milbank sees the attacks as the opportunity which a labile political structure required in order to reestablish state sovereignty: hence, the insistence on the alleged repressive transformation of politics. Milbank's reading — Sept. 11 provides a pretext with which to reassert sovereignty and American state power — echoes a theme frequently found in the European press, albeit in a less theoretical context. Sept. 11 has been presented there as evidence of the error of neo-liberalism in the sense that it shows the absolute or rather ultimate necessity of the state: in terms of military action, domestic security, and the economic stimulus program. Needless to say, neo-liberalism was rarely anarchistic or consistently libertarian; it did not call for the abolition of the state. But, from the standpoint of continental European statists, it represented a significant ideological threat since the era of Reagan and Thatcher. Sept. 11 is therefore instrumentalized as emphasizing the need for state power. The same dialectic of state power, on the one hand, and the post-national tendency inherent in networks, on the other, surfaced earlier in the debates regarding immigration, in the US, especially regarding Proposition 187 in California. In any case, Sept. 11 is taken as an indication for the reassertion of state authority: Millbank regrets this, fearing an expansion of a repressive state, while continental anti-liberals in effect applaud the opportunity to reassert the need for state bureaucracy after waves of neo-liberal critiques.

The first two clusters of ideas — globalization, on the one hand, and state sovereignty, on the other — evidently shadow each other. The globalization axis involves claims about the relativization of "local" nation-state power by overriding

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structures of power. Meanwhile, the current discussion of sovereignty involves the horizontal networks, eroding local power from the sides. The two fit together in various and contradictory ways in the several essays, but in general Sept. 11 is taken as a protest against the first point, i.e., against globalization and American power, while also as evidence of the vibrancy of the second point, i.e., the obsolescence of the nation-state in the context of networks and the diffusion of power. A third axis in the discussion involves the particularity of traditions and religion, representing an alternative to questions of the state. Although Baudrillard abstracts from any specific tradition, he provides the most general formulation of this problem, suggesting that terrorism recovers particularity against a system of generalized exchange, and that the terrorists of Sept. 11 could therefore lay claim to a greater reality than the unreality of politics as usual. Minc takes him to task for this characteristic fascination of French intellectuals with noble savages: for Minc, Baudrillard's attraction to Sept. 11 is one with Foucault's erstwhile enthusiasm for the Ayatollah Khomeini. (One could add as well Sartre's enthusiasm for violence in Algeria).

Yet, this romanticization of particularity is not only a problem for French poststructuralism. It derives ultimately from the particularity of Romanticism, i.e., the central standing of particularity in Romantic thought, and therefore the dialectic opposite of Enlightenment universalism. Baudrillard's heroization of particularity against generalized exchange is in many ways reminiscent of similar formulations in Critical Theory, with one important difference: Baudrillard, in effect, takes the critique of Enlightenment and plugs it into the French tradition of engagement. While he understands the dialectic relation between the universalizing system and the particular resistance, he quickly leaps to an unambiguous and fully committed alignment with one side against the other. The dialectic is flattened out in the name of a clear political allegiance. His engagement means partisanship, admirable perhaps in the political sphere (if not in this case), but deleterious to thoughtful analysis. On this point, Benoist provides a more complex account, capable of linking a critical examination of globalization to an emphatic distancing from the attacks. Baudrillard provides exactly the opposite of that distance, indeed even imputing a generalized desire for the attacks.

Tradition surfaces in Milbank in interestingly indirect ways when he makes repeated reference to Anglo-Saxon values of liberty. Where "Anglo-Saxon" is, for continental discussions, typically a code for neo-liberalism, seen as essentialistically tied to England and the US, Milbank's remarks aim at reclaiming the term against the dynamic of empire in American imperialism. Thus, if there is a clash of civilizations it is not between Islam and the West, but between Anglo-Saxon particularity (with its value of liberty) and the convolute of oppressive ideas associated with American power. Indeed, drawing on Hardt and Negri's *Empire*, Milbank even expresses nostalgia for the erstwhile character of British and French imperialism, seen as more respectful of alterity than the homogenizing character of American power. Like Benoist and Tarchi, Milbank draws on standard anti-imperialist characterizations of the US (even if their theoretical creativity is

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considerably richer than, e.g., the flat anti-imperialist rhetoric of Chomsky).

What makes Milbank interesting, however, is not the condemnations of American foreign policy, but rather his signature theoretical vision: the critique of the secular character of the modern state. The central thinker in the movement of "Radical Orthodoxy," his work involves a reconstruction of an Anglican version of Christian Socialism. Hence, his call to abandon "the global idolatrous worship of sacralized absolute sovereignty, and its empty pursuit of power, in West and East alike." Hence also, his call to reappropriate the Biblical and Aristotelian "metaphysical legacy common to Christianity, Judaism and Islam." For "a shared overarching global polity would embody this intimation in continuously revisable structures dedicated to pursuing the common good in so far as this can be agreed upon. It would also embody this imperfection through the maximum possible dispersion and deflection of human power." His balancing act between an optimistic vision of politics as the pursuit of the good and a pessimistic vision of the need to limit power stakes out a political theological position. Clearly nationhood, sovereignty, and religion represent a historically fruitful set of issues for political thought. Peguy and Niebuhr hover in the background, and Berlusconi's statements regarding Christian Europe are a signal in the present, likely to become all the more significant if the next chancellor of Germany turns out to be a Christian Socialist.

The question of religious specificity is, however, central to the Sept. 11 discussions. In the popular press, much has been made of the turn to religion in the US as a response to the attacks. In this context, Benoist's objection to the religious character of the American response — Bush's "crusade" rhetoric — can be taken as symptomatic of the standard European vision of the US as excessively religious. Soon after the attacks, *Le Monde* ran an editorial asserting a parallel between Islamic fundamentalism, meaning the Taliban and Bin Laden, and Protestant fundamentalism: by which is meant not far-Right evangelicals, but any public singing of the "Battle Hymn of the Republic" or public references to a God in whom "we trust." Where Milbank sees too little religion in public life, another predominant European response is to condemn an alleged American excess of religion. This is particularly the case in France where both the Left (Jospin) and the Right (Chirac) successfully lobbied against the inclusion of references to "religion" in the European Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union.[3] Yet, to the extent that the US is seen as "too" religious, one has to note how contemporary anti-Americanism is internally contradictory. American power is sometimes characterized as a strangely savage particularity, a country of bizarre religious fanaticism, insistently imposing its unique taste and weird culture on a too compliant world, while at other times America becomes the exemplification of absolute abstraction, the degradation of all particularity, the complete absence of a specific culture: absolute universalism. In neither case, of course,

3. Cf. Henri Tincq, "Nouvelle polemique sur l'heritage religeux de l'Europe," in *Le Monde* (Jan. 19, 2002), p. 5.

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are European critics able to perceive the genuine heterogeneity of American culture and society — a heterogeneity which is, to be sure, threatened by internal processes within the US pushing toward administrative conformism (comparable to similar bureaucratizing tendencies elsewhere), but a heterogeneity which is nevertheless at least as rich, if not more so, than in the European statist regimes.

Religion figures most emphatically, however, in the discussion of Islam. Baudrillard denies any particular connection between Sept. 11 and any aspect of Islam: thus, if Islam dominated the world, this sort of murderous resistance would be directed against it. One wonders with what evidence such a claim can be made. Benoist, Milbank, and Tarchi, with nuances, try to rescue Islam against the attacks to which it is putatively subject. Their consistent tendency is to downplay differences between Europe and the Islamic world (Islam is just like the West, Islam preserved Greek learning, Islam was the source of the European Renaissance, etc.). At the very same time, they maximize the differences between Europe and the US, insisting on unbridgeable cultural differences. The internal contradiction within this position is obvious: as Islam is reconciled to Europe, as in Milbank's reference to a common heritage, one falls into the trap of precisely that same universalism that is otherwise linked to the dangers of globalization. If one wants to assert the non-difference of Islam, then it is difficult to object to universalism and the Enlightenment; alternatively, if one recognizes the difference, then one cannot proscribe a discussion of the alternative traditions.

Precisely that discussion is provided in Pellicani's extensive and detailed discussion of Islam and its political ramifications. There are, it turns out, some (rare) examples of Islamic modernization, e.g., the Kemalist revolution in Turkey; and there are plenty of Islamic liberals and democrats, although mainly in exile. The core question Pellicani addresses is the inability of Islam, in general, and with exceptions noted, to separate between political and religious authority. In the official response to Sept. 11, the US government has, for obvious tactical reasons, been wont to make clear that it is not waging a war against Islam, the religion (hence the counterproductive character of the unfortunate "crusade" reference). The result has been successful insofar as the anticipated Islamic solidarity against the Western war has not materialized. Yet, a certain political correctness in the discussion of Islam has ensued. Bush's characterization of it as a "religion of peace" runs counter to at least some major traditions within Islam. To explain away the inability of Islamic countries to develop democratic regimes solely in terms of oil or imperialism implies a considerable denigration of the vitality of local cultures. It is therefore urgent to pose the question of religion and tradition in the political sphere. Schmitt's dictum on the theological origins of political categories would seem to hold at least as much in the Islamic world as for Europe — but the theology and the politics are different. The American government may want to avoid a religious discussion in the political sphere — and that distinction is characteristic of a particular political-theological legacy, the separation of church and state for reasons as much religious as political. That, however, is surely no reason to avoid

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discussion of the political consequences of Islamic theology in a theoretical context.

In fact, the question of religion and the distinctiveness of tradition pop up elsewhere. At one low point, Baudrillard is able to speak of the "banal" character of American life, evidently the degraded alternative to the terrorists' "sacrificial" pacts. More clearly, Benoist complains that "Western liberal globalization spreads a model of life philosophy, which gives absolute priority to worldly pleasures, to the logic of profit and the rules of money." Is it a case of imposition, the intrusion of an unwanted tradition disrupting absolutely different and fully intact cultural communities? Or could it be the case that, at least on the level of individuals and families, if not for states and nations, the cultural options associated with liberalism are simply very attractive? Thus, Minc bluntly asserts the absolute superiority of democracy and the recognition that economic globalization is the only possible response to Third World poverty. Regardless of cultural backgrounds, the promises of freedom of choice and opportunities to improve one's lot are very tempting for individuals; to the extent that those existential conditions are associated with neo-liberalism, in turn linked to the US, and furthermore contrasted with oppressive regimes and restrictive traditions, a certain homogenization may indeed be desirable. Yet, it hardly makes sense to defend local cultures for their own sake, if they lose indigenous support.

More germane to the question of religion, however, is Benoist's accusation of the American promulgation of "worldly pleasures." Thus, the US is presented as simultaneously too religious and too worldly. At this point, the viability of the criticism begins to buckle under the weight of its own internal inconsistencies. Sept. 11 is treated as evidence of a transformation in the fundamental character of the international system (changed character of states and wars in the era of networks); this observation is then collapsed with the criticism of American power, and America is misunderstood, in cultural terms, as a one-dimensional source of homogenization. For five centuries, Europeans have stereotyped the Western hemisphere as the continent without history or identity. Therefore, the discussion is likely to culminate in the accusation that American influence robs others of their history and identity. Aside from the fact that any vibrant culture — history, identity, tradition — is always in a process of change, the specific particularity of American culture, including its internal heterogeneity, is missed by critics who can only see its conformism, the presumed consequence of the absence of history.

Universalism is hardly an American invention. It is a particular feature of a Western tradition with ramifications as strong in Europe as in the US, even if its specific realizations differ (just as they differ across various European venues, e.g. French and German constructions of citizenship). Universalist descriptions of a human condition are not some inescapable logical necessity; parochial traditions are not somehow disproved by universalism and thereby eradicated. Nonetheless, the description inherent in universalism of norms of equality and human potential has an extraordinary power to challenge existing structures of power, just as it has a remarkable ability to combine with different cultural traditions. This dialectic of the universal and the particular is the defining feature of a Western

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tradition, constantly renegotiated and redefined, which imbues this tradition and its institutions with their particular dynamism and integrative capacity.

Furthermore, that tradition is marked by an oppositional and always potentially divisive relation between religion and political power. Rooted in the adversariality of the prophets to the ancient Judaic state, and rearticulated as a division between worldly and spiritual power in the Christian Gospels, it was played out as the central drama of the Middle Ages between Emperor and Pope. Reformulated in the Reformation in the Lutheran doctrine of two powers, it underpins the modern suspicion of state power — a suspicion that informs the models of separate powers and federalism. Drawing on deep cultural and religious traditions, this hesitancy regarding political power may be less developed in Islam, despite exceptions on both sides of the ledger. If not a clash of civilizations, the two alternative understandings of the relation between political authority and religious faith has come into clear focus. Thus, it has become more urgent to talk about the specificity of Western culture, which is surely what Giuliani meant with his claim that cultural relativism had come to an end.

The deep political impact of Sept. 11 has led to an unprecedented international alliance, including old allies and erstwhile enemies. It would appear to be a global structure of power with at least nominal allegiance to a universal set of values in the shared opposition to terror. Yet, this global alignment of power has gone hand in hand with an insistence on American independence. To some extent, this unilateralism simply reflects the enormous military-technological superiority which the US enjoys over any of the European states. Yet, the unilateralism also results from the particular vicissitudes of the foreign-policy predispositions of the Bush administration: despite its initial hesitancy with regard to interventionism, suspected of hidden isolationism, international engagement was thrust upon it by Sept. 11. In contrast to the policy of Bush senior in the Gulf War, it has insisted on maintaining a free hand, to the chagrin of its partners. This assertion of American particularity in the intrastate system — the emphatic insistence that the US will defend itself and give this defense priority over international institutions — mirrors the domestic ramifications of Sept. 11, the greater willingness to recognize national interest as distinct from global structures or universal principles. It is, to say the least, inconsistent for critics of globalization (or universalism) to complain about an American foreign policy that, rejecting a one-sided universalism, is driven precisely by national independence. On the contrary, the conceptual difficulty may lie with the critics of globalization, both Right and Left, who oppose transnational forces by invoking the need for ever more international regulation. The point here, however, is not to debate the various positions presented in this issue. Suffice it to say that they demonstrate how the Sept. 11 discussion has become the focal point for key political-conceptual transformations, just as they indicate how "the one remaining superpower" is likely to face a continued and increasingly vigorous cultural criticism. And sooner or later, cultural criticism has political consequences.

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Islam and the West

Luciano Pellicani

When, after having forced the Shah of Iran into exile, Ayatollah Khomeini proclaimed the Islamic Republic in 1979, Helmut Schmidt remarked: "Now we will have to start studying *The Koran*." If his advice had been followed, today, after Al Qaeda's terrorist attack on the Twin Towers, the West would have been better prepared to deal with Osama bin Laden's declaration of war.[1] Literature about the Islamic world has grown significantly over the last 20 years, but awareness of the threat that Islamic fundamentalism poses to Western civilization has not grown apace. Because there is fear of being accused of harboring Eurocentric prejudices, most scholars go out of their way to provide a reassuring and politically correct image of Islam.[2] Even after Samuel Huntington wrote about the clash of civilizations, there was little attention paid to what was cooking in the "Islamic pot." Most "experts," whose arrogance was matched only by their obtuseness, responded condescendingly to Huntington[3] — almost as if his account was a facile improvisation or, worse, irresponsible warmongering. They defined *The Clash of Civilizations* as a "kind of oracular hotchpotch,"[4] despite the fact that the Iranian revolution had triggered a chain reaction, generating fundamentalist movements determined to purify the community of believers (*Umma*), demolish "apostate" governments, and destroy the Great Satan (the US).[5]

Of course, the rise of fundamentalist movements does not mean that Islam has declared war on the West. Fundamentalism is a particular interpretation of

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1. See Massimo Introvigne, *Osama bin Laden* (Turin: Elledici, 2001). Bin Laden's *modus operandi* has a historical precedent: that of the Old Man of the Mountain made famous in Europe by Marco Polo. Even more famous is the name of the youth (*fidai*) chosen to carry out the suicide attacks (called *hashishi*, from which the word "assassin" is derived), since in order to have him submit to the blindest and most enthusiastic obedience, he was drugged with massive doses of hashish. Founded in 1091, when Ismalite al-Hasan ibn as-Sabbah took possession of the castle of Alamut, the Organization of Assassins was active up to 1256, the year the Mongols invaded Syria.
2. A typical example is Alfonso Di Nola, *L'Islam* (Rome: Newton Compton, 2001), which contains only a fleeting mention of holy war.
3. Samuel Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1996). Huntington's thesis had been anticipated in Luciano Pellicani, "La guerra culturale fra Occidente e Oriente. Il caso del fondamentalismo islamico," in *Mondoperaio*, No. 5, (1990); now in *Modernizzazione e secolarizzazione* (Milan: Il Saggiatore, 1997).
4. Peter Partner, *Il Dio degli eserciti* (Turin: Einaudi, 1997), p. 333.
5. See Gilles Kepel, *Jihad* (Roma: Carocci, 2001).

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The Koran, and its legitimacy is challenged by other Muslims.[6] Still, "the vision of the fundamentalist world, i.e., of the political ideology that divides the world into Islamic *in-groups* and the rest, the enemies, each with its own way of conceiving political order, is now the most prevalent in the whole Islamic universe."[7] Thus, while a small minority, the *jihadists* constitute a frightening threat, not only because they are determined to use the most ruthless and underhanded means to achieve their aims, but also because they express the Muslims' intense resentment of an arrogant and imperialist West, which they feel is besieging them. In Arnold J. Toynbee's lexicon, this means that, despite the fact that they have long since gained their independence, the people of the *Dar al-Islam* continue to see themselves as the "external proletariat" of modern industrial civilization.[8]

Mohammad's prophetic message — the last and final revelation — is based on a clearly dichotomous and warmongering view of the world. The *Rasul Allah*, the messenger of God, not only divides the world into two regions, the *Dar al-Islam* and the *Dar al-kufr*, i.e., the "House of the True Religion" and "House of Unbelief"; he repeatedly states that there can be no peace between the two regions until Islam has triumphed, after the "true believers" have conquered the region of unbelief. Sometimes the *Dar al-kufr* is also considered to be the *Dar al-harb*, the "House of War."[9] This is a holy war: one desired by God. As such, it is a "mission of truth" aimed at "destroying falsity"[10] in the entire world since, as a famous hadith says, "God has given the earth back to the Muslims."[11]

Claims to the contrary notwithstanding,[12] in *The Koran* holy war is considered a religious duty, although the *ulama* — the doctors of the Sacred Law — have never included it among the "pillars of Islam." It is not just a defensive, but an

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6. See Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *Traditional Islam in the Modern World* (London: KPI, 1987); Burhan Ghalioun, *Islam e islamismo* (Rome: Editori Riuniti, 1998); Sadik J. Al-Azm, *L'Illuminismo islamico* (Rome: De Renzo, 2001); Fatima Mernissi, *La peur-modernité* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1992); Mohammad Said Al-Ashmawy, *L'Islam politique* (Paris: La Découverte, 1987); Abdallah Laroui, *Islam et modernité* (Paris: La Découverte, 1987).

7. Bassam Tibi, *Il fondamentalismo religioso* (Turin: Bollati Boringhieri, 1997), pp. 81-82.

8. For Toynbee, "the true hall-mark of the proletarian is neither poverty nor humble birth but the awareness — and the resentment inspired by this awareness — of being disinherited from one's ancestral place in society and being unwanted in a community which is one's rightful home." See *A Study of History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1962, Vol. V), p. 63.

9. Muslim tradition also has a third land: the *Dar al-sulh*, "the House of Peace," that includes "regions such as India and Africa where Muslims are in the minority but are permitted for the most part to live in peace and to practice their religion freely." See Solomon Nigosian, *Islam* (London: Crucible, 1987), p. 16.

10. *Il Corano* (Milan: Hoepli, 1991), Vol. VIII, pp. 5 and 8.

11. Cited from Louis Gardet, *Les hommes de l'Islam* (Brussels: Editions Complexe, 1984), p. 123.

12. See Franco Cardini, who writes that : "according to the *Jihad*, even the Crusades are not a holy war," in *Noi e l'Islam* (Bari: Laterza, 2001), p. 54.

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offensive war, an imperialistic war that will only end when the "true religion" triumphs all over the earth, because "its supreme aim is to establish a single community ruled by a single authority, the Islam of the *Umma islamiyya*."[13] So, Sergio Noja's understanding of *jihad* (which means "struggle") as a purely defensive war is wrong.[14] While he acknowledges that *jihad* means two very different things — the "great war" against base human instincts and the "little war" against the infidels — he cites some verses in the *sura* of "The Cow," from which he deduces that Mohammad predicted a defensive war accompanied by the warning to avoid excesses.[15] However, the *sura* of the "Accessions" does not confirm this positive interpretation:[16] "When your Lord revealed to the angels: I am with you, therefore make strong those who believe. I will cast terror into the hearts of those who disbelieve. Strike them in their heads and cut off their fingertips. This is because they have acted against Allah and His Apostle; and whoever acts against Allah and His Apostle should know that Allah will be violent in meaning out punishment. They will be told that this is their punishment and they should bear it, because unbelievers are destined to suffer the chastisement of fire."[17] The extermination of idolaters is again invoked in the *sura* of "The Immunity": "slay the idolaters wherever you find them, and take them captives and besiege them and lie in wait for them in every ambush. . . Fight them, Allah will punish them by your hands."[18]

Despite the fact that in *The Koran* he is called the Merciful (*al-Rahman*), Mohammad's God is no less merciless and revengeful than the God of the Old Testament, of whom he is a mirror image.[19] Similarly, it cannot be claimed — although it often has, for understandable political reasons — that Islam is a religion

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13. Bruno Etienne, *L'islamisme radical* (Paris: Hachette, 1987), pp. 190-191.
14. Sergio Noja, *L'Islam moderno* (Milan: Mondadori, 1990).
15. "Fight in the way of Allah against those who fight against you, and do not exceed limits, for surely Allah does not love those who exceed limits." *Il Corano*, II, 190.
16. No less positive is the interpretation of Giorgio Vercellin, who in his *Jihad* (Florence: Giunti, 2001) has chosen not to cite the verses of the *sura* of the "Accessions" in which Mohammed theorizes the religious duty to exterminate idolaters.
17. *Il Corano* (VIII, 12, 13, 14).
18. *Ibid.* (IX, 5 and 14).
19. "And thou shalt consume all the people which the Lord thy God shall deliver thee; thine eye shall have no pity upon them: neither shalt thou serve their gods; for that will be a snare unto thee. . . . And the Lord thy God will put out those nations before thee by little and little: thou mayest not consume them at once, lest the beasts of the field increase upon thee. But the Lord thy God shall deliver them unto thee, and shall destroy them with a mighty destruction, until they be destroyed. And he shall deliver their kings into thine hand, and thou shalt destroy their name from under heaven: there shall no man be able to stand before thee, until thou have destroyed them. The graven images of their gods shall ye burn with fire: thou shalt not desire the silver or gold that is on them, nor take it unto thee, lest thou be snared therein: for it is an abomination to the Lord thy God. Neither shalt thou bring an abomination into thine house, lest thou be a cursed thing like it: but thou shalt utterly detest it, and thou shalt utterly abhor it; for it is a cursed thing" (*Deuteronomy*, VII, 17, 22-26).

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of peace; on the contrary, it is a religion of permanent war, where unbelievers have to choose between "conversion or death" — something that (fortunately for subjugated people) the Arabs ignored after their first conquests. Out of political calculation, they extended the status of *dhimmi* — that *The Koran* envisages only for the "people of the Book," i.e., Jews and Christians — to polytheists (Mandaeans, Mazdeists, Hindus and Buddhists), as long as, naturally, "they pay tax in acknowledgment of superiority and that they are in a state of subjection."[20] Of course, every so often the *ulama* demanded the literal application of *The Koran*, but "theological reason" rarely prevailed over "political" ones, even in India,[21] where theological hatred of idolatry often erupted, with the destruction of temples, massacres of Hindus, and odious discriminations meant to humiliate the "infidels."[22] Overall, the Muslim conquerors followed the code of behavior set out in a letter by the governor of Iraq, Hajjaji ibn Yusuf,[23] to his nephew Mohammad ibn Qasim, who, having conquered the Sind, was asking for instructions on how the idolaters should be treated: "As long as the Indians have subjected themselves to us and have paid their tax, what more can you ask of them? We have taken them under our protection, therefore we cannot deprive them of their goods and their lives. Give them permission to worship their Gods. No one must be stopped from practicing his religion. They can live according to their customs."[24]

If the regime of tolerance institutionalized by the Arabs in the territories they conquered[25] was prompted by purely political reasons — their aim was to dominate and exploit the subjected populations, not exterminate them — their attitude toward the spiritual products of the "infidels" was prompted by very different

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20. *Il Corano*, *op. cit.*, (IX, 29).

21. That the tolerance demonstrated by the Turks and Afghans in India was dictated by political opportunism is very clear from an episode narrated by the reporter Barani. "One day a group of theologians asked for an audience with the sultan Iltutmish and pointed out to him that it was his duty to tell the Indians they either had to convert to the Islamic faith or die. But they were told that in these conditions the Indians would have been relieved and would have been able to defeat the Muslim dominators." A. T. Embree and Friedrich Wilhelm, *India* (Milan: Feltrinelli, 1978), pp.205-206.

22. See Louis Frédéric, *L'Inde de l'Islam* (Paris: Arthaud, 1989); S. R. Sharma, *The Crescent in India* (Delhi: Sanjay Prakashan, 1986).

23. A response consistent with what the supreme head of the Arab armies, Abu Ubaidah, had already arranged. See *Jurji Zaydan's History of Islamic Civilization* (New Delhi: Kitab Bhavan, 1981), p.122.

24. *Chach-Nama*, in H. M. Elliot and John Dowson, eds., *History of India as Told by Its Historians* (Delhi: Low Price Publications, 1990), Vol. I, pp. 185-186.

25. The regime of tolerance institutionalized by the Arabs was so "liberal" that in *The Jews of Islam* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), Bernard Lewis defined Islam as "the Jews' paradise." Lévi-Strauss also pointed out that for Muslims "tolerance, to the extent in which it exists, is a continual victory over themselves. The Prophet condemned them to a situation of everlasting tension caused by the contradiction between the universal scope of the revelation and the admission of the plurality of religious faiths." See *Tristi tropici* (Milan: Mondadori, 1988), p. 440.

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reasons. In particular, they were so fascinated by the Greeks, as the uncouth Romans had been centuries before, that at the beginning of the 9th century they created the House of Knowledge.[26] Thanks to this admirable institution, the classics of philosophy and science were translated, studied, and disseminated.[27] This contributed to making Islamic civilization the intellectual beacon of the Mediterranean at a time when Christian Europe was struggling to get out of the darkness of the late Middle Ages, and Byzantium was calcifying its way of life by banning philosophy and, with it, free investigation.[28] For many centuries, there was no field of knowledge — theology, philosophy, medicine, mathematics, astronomy, geography, historiography, etc. — in which the Muslims did not have an unquestionable primacy.[29] Equally unchallenged was the economic primacy[30] of the Arab-Muslim world over all the other civilizations, except for the Chinese. Then, around the 12th century, the light began slowly, but inexorably, to fade in the *Dar al-Islam*, but not before the great works of Averroes, destroyed and forbidden by the Almohads, began to circulate in Europe, triggering the renaissance of philosophy and the scientific spirit in Western civilization.[31]

There have been many attempts to explain why one of the most brilliant and creative civilizations in history began to decay and petrify. The most convincing — albeit ignored by both Muslim and Western scholars[32] — is the one provided by the inspired 4th century Arab historian, Ibn Khaldun. According to him, the Islamic empire's economy was ruined because ownership rights were

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26. The establishment of the House of Knowledge seems to have been inspired by a *Hadith* of Mohammad that goes as follows: "Seek out science, even if you have to go as far as China to do so." Cited from André Clot, *Harun al-Rashid* (Milano: Rizzoli, 1991), p. 265.

27. See Dominique Chevalier and André Miquel, ed., *Les Arabes* (Paris: Fayard, 1995), pp. 298ff.

28. 529 — the year in which Justinian abolished the School of Athens — can be considered the beginning of the decline of the Byzantine civilization.

29. See Carmela Baffioni, *Storia della filosofia islamica* (Milan: Mondadori, 1991); Henry Corbin, *Storia della filosofia islamica* (Milan: Adelphi, 1991).

30. See Dominique and Jacques Sourdel, *La civilisation de l'Islam classique* (Paris: Arthaud, 1983); Maurice Lombard, *L'Islam dans sa première grandeur* (Paris: Flammarion, 1971); Claude Cahen, *L'Islam* (Paris: Hachette, 1997); Bernard Lewis, *The Arabs in History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993). The superiority of the Islamic economy between the 9th and 12th centuries prompted René Kalisky to write that Arab bankers and merchants "installed, against the spirit of the Law, a *de facto* capitalist regime that they exported to Europe." *L'Islam* (Alleur: Marabout, 1987), p.171.

31. See Edward Grant, *The Foundations of Modern Science in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

32. Bernard Lewis, in *The Middle East,* attempts to explain the ruinous decadence of Arab civilization, but does not cite Ibn Khaldun. This is surprising, considering that, when the Muslim historian Naima tried to diagnose the lethargy afflicting the Ottoman Empire, he referred to the author of the *Muqaddima*. See Norman Itzkowitz, *Ottoman Empire and Islamic Tradition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980), pp. 102-103.

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systematically violated by the rulers, who thought they could dispose *ad libitum* of the their subjects' possessions, with the inevitable consequence of smothering any motivation for work and enterprise. According to Khaldun's *Muqaddima*: "The violation of private property means killing in men the wish to earn more, since they fear their efforts will be rewarded with expropriation. Once deprived of the hope of earning, they will not make any extra effort. Attacks on private property discourages them even more. If these attacks are universal and affect all sources of revenue, then there is a general stagnation in business, due to the disappearance of any incentive to work. Vice versa, lesser attacks on private property generate less disincentives to work. Because civilization, public well-being and prosperity depend on human productivity and efforts, in all directions, in their own interests and for their own profit. When men no longer work to make a living and cease any lucrative activity, material civilization deteriorates and everything goes from bad to worse. To find work, men are lost abroad. The population diminishes. The country empties and its cities fall into ruin. The disintegration of civilization involves that of the state, just as any change in matter is followed by a change in form."[33]

This lucid diagnosis of the cancer gnawing into the vital tissue of Muslim civilization makes it easy to understand how the Arab traveler Ibn Jubair, when he arrived in Palestine in 1184, saw that his co-religionists — *The Koran* obliged "true believers" to abandon the *Dar al-kufr* — preferred to live under the rule of *kafirun* (infidels) as long as these latter "acted justly."[34] Here, the behavior of the Christian sovereigns was not dictated by a superior moral code. If they were governing "justly," it was because European society had assumed a very original political-juridical configuration during its interminable civil wars. According to the Arab historian Amin Maalouf, it had become "a society distributing rights."[35]

Of course the "citizen" was unknown. Nevertheless, barons, knights, religious orders, universities, merchants, craftsmen and even peasants enjoyed precisely established and usually respected rights,[36] which aroused the envy of the *Dar al-Islam*'s inhabitants,[37] who suffered under despotism. Consequently,

33. Ibn Khaldun, *Discours sur l'histoire universelle* (Paris: Sindbad, 1978), Vol. II, pp. 584-585.

34. Ibn Jubair, *A través del Oriente* (Barcellona: Ediciones del Serbal, 1988), p. 352.

35. Amin Maalouf, *Les Croisades vues par les Arabes* (Paris: Lattés, 1983), p. 301.

36. Thus, in the 12th century, the Teutonic Order, as soon as it had subjected a city, put "in writing what it considered were the right political conditions for the burghers." Eric Christiensen, *The Northern Crusades* (London: Macmillan, 1980), p. 115. In other words, it set up an authentic "citizens charter," something entirely unknown in the *Dar al-Islam*.

37. After having visited the Kingdom of Jerusalem, the emir Usama ibn Munqidh observed with amusement: "Once the knights have made a judgment, neither the king nor any of their chiefs can change or undo it." Cited from Franco Gabrieli, *Storici Arabi delle Crociate* (Turin: Einaudi, 1987), p. 74. Obviously, this is not constitutionalism; but it is equally obvious that it is the beginning of a road that leads to the institutionalization of the rule of law, protective shell of the "freedom of the modern people."

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whereas the rights of the producing classes, especially property rights, were guaranteed in the kingdoms that the crusaders, *manu militari*, had carved out in the Near East, these rights were entirely unknown in the Islamic world.[38] Their governors used any means — whipping, prison and even torture — "to confiscate the merchants's wealth."[39] The general rule of the Abbaside empire was the following: "The *vizier* confiscates the property of the governor who falls into disgrace and the governor appropriates the goods of the lower officials and private citizens."[40] With rare exceptions, a rule — codified with a euphemism *musadara* (contributions) — was kept by all sovereigns in the *Dar al-Islam*, and for whom the mass of subjects was nothing but a flock to fleece.[41] This prompted Engels, after François Bernier's invaluable reports,[42] to define the countries dominated by Sultanism as "predatory economies," because the subjects' property was insecure and fiscal practices were extremely oppressive.[43] All this was based on the idea, spelled out by the famous Seljug vizier Nizam al Mulk, that "the land of a kingdom and its inhabitants belonged to the sultan,"[44] who had the right to do what he pleased with it, since it was God Himself who had "given him possession of the world."[45] Since the *ulama*, dominated by the fear of anarchy, continually reiterated that subjects were obliged "never to resist the sovereign, even when he was unjust,"[46] the inevitable consequence was to convert the Muslim state from a "theocracy of principle" into an "autocracy of caliphs and sultans."[47]

Neither the caliphs nor, even less, the sultans had the power to make laws. According to the Sacred Immutable Tradition (the *Sunna*), everything physical and moral has to be governed by the *Sharia*, which, "in politics as in other issues, was based on the Revelation and thus was not subject to change."[48] The absence

38. See Bernard Lewis, "The Idea of Freedom in Modern Islamic Political Thought," in Bernard Lewis, *Islam in History* (Peoria, Ill.: Open Court, 1972).

39. Claude Cahen, "Economy, Society, Institutions," in P. M. Holt, A. K. S. Lambton and Bernard Lewis, eds., *The Cambridge History of Islam* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970, vol. II), p. 537.

40. Philip K. Hitti, *History of the Arabs* (London: Macmillan, 1990), p. 319.

41. *Raya* (herd) was the term used for the masses in the Ottoman Empire. See Alessandro Bombaci and S. J. Shaw, *L'Impero ottomano* (Turin: Utet, 1981), p. 415.

42. François Bernier, *Viaggi negli Stati del Gran Mogol*, (Pavia: Ibis, 1991).

43. According to Engels: "Turkey, like any oriental despotism, is incompatible with the capitalist economy: the surplus extorted is grabbed by the rapacious satraps and pashas. The first fundamental condition of the bourgeoisie is lacking: the personal safety and private property." Cited in B. S. Turner, *Weber and Islam* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1974), pp. 15-16.

44. Nizam al Mulk, *Traité du gouvernement* (Paris: Sindbad, 1984), p. 72.

45. *Ibid*, p. 74.

46. S. E. Finer, *The History of Government* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), p. 721.

47. Louis Gardet, *La Cité musulmane* (Paris: Vrim, 1981), p. 245.

48. Bernard Lewis, *The Political Language of Islam* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1988), p. 4.

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of mediators capable of limiting sovereign power redered this uncontrollable. Unlike Western Europe, in the Islamic world there were no hereditary aristocracies,[49] no autocephalous cities,[50] no autonomous hierocratic institutions. The sovereign's authority — whether the caliph's or the sultan's — was practically unlimited, and was was meant to guarantee two things: "personal control over the general economy and to place each and every citizen at the mercy of their demands."[51] This was achieved through a particular method of recruiting a military staff: the "Mutasim system."[52] So as not to have to depend on independent social forces, the ruler purchased young slaves (*mamluk or ghulam*), whom he treated as sons and trained carefully so that they became docile tools in his hands. These "military automata" were called "apostles of talent," since they were chosen for their physical and intellectual qualities and, given their condition of absolute dependency, could aspire to high positions only by showing unconditional loyalty to their lord.[53] A slave belonged to the state and "was without any family or local ties to compromise his total dedication to his master and to the military caste."[54] They also constituted an élite "with a great inner cohesion and dangerously irresponsible with regards to the community,"[55] which they used as they pleased. This meant that, after the politico-military leadership passed from the Arabs to the Turks, in the Islamic world the state was ruled by the despot's slaves and was but a "dictatorship of a foreign army over the native population."[56]

Despite its economic irrationality, for many centuries the "Mutasim system" worked well, from a politico-military viewpoint. Busbecq, Ferdinand of Austria's

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49. Hierarchical relations between sultan and nobles were regulated by the *iqta*, which, not being personal property but only a mechanism for decentralizing the collection of taxes, produced neither an hereditary aristocracy nor that fragmentation of power typical of European feudalism. See Ira M. Lapidus, *A History of Islamic Societies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), pp. 146-152, and Gerhard Endress, *Introduzione alla storia del mondo musulmano* (Venice: Marsilio 1994), pp. 114-116.

50. In the 12th century, the Fertile Crescent bourgeoisie managed to secure its participation in government and even to create citizen republics, not unlike those of Western Europe. In the following century, however, military power eradicated all of the cities' autonomy. Deprived of a bourgeoisie capable of energizing economic and intellectual life, the Fertile Crescent began its decline. See Eliyahu Ashtor, *A Social and Economic History of the Near East in the Middle Ages* (London: Collins 1976), pp. 234ff.

51. Ira M. Lapidus, *Muslim Cities in the Later Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), p. 56.

52. It was so called after the caliph Mutasim, who developed it in the 9th century. See Mervet A. Shaban, *Islamic History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

53. See Ishwari Prasad, *l'Inde du VII au XVI siècle* (Paris: De Boccard, 1930), p. 214; and Patricia Crone, *Slaves on Horses* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), p. 79.

54. Ira M. Lepidus, *A History of Islamic Societies*, *op. cit.*, p. 355.

55. M. G. S. Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1977, vol. I), p. 335.

56. Giorgio Vercellin, *Istituzioni del mondo islamico* (Turin: Einaudi, 1996), p. 371.

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ambassador to Istanbul, was so impressed by the integrity of the Ottoman Empire and its formidable war machine that he reckoned that Europe, lacerated by religious wars and split into a myriad of states struggling for hegemony, had little hope of stopping the expansion of Islam.[57] Two centuries later, not only was Busbecq's pessimistic forecast proved wrong, but feuding Europe had gained an overwhelming superiority over the Ottoman Empire. To explain this extraordinary historical fact, Franco Cardini argued that: "Even now, it is not unusual to find significant vestiges of the ancient conviction that Western civilization had spread throughout the world thanks to the superiority of the Gospels over other cults and other faiths — and later thanks to the moral superiority of the democratic-parliamentary system over other political systems — rather than because of its technology; and especially those sails and cannons . . . on which the true, perhaps only, but fundamental, superiority of the West over the rest of the world proved to be based."[58]

Western Europe *has* managed to dominate the world thanks to its technological superiority. Yet, less evident is why it had this superiority. Thus, Cardini fails to realize that the West had a political-institutional superiority before a technological one. After asking "Why the Chinese, having invented gunpowder long before anyone else, did not industrialize," Cipolla suggests that technological progress in China was blocked by society's lack of independence within the state.[59] The Chinese state had all the typical traits of Weber's "iron cage": according to Etienne Balazs, it was a "welfare-state full of tentacles, a totalitarian and interventionist moloch-state."[60] By preventing the birth of autonomous cities and the formation of a dynamic entrepreneurial bourgeoisie, it blocked both industrial as well as scientific and technological development in China.[61] The same was true of the Islamic state, which managed to "cage" the societies it ruled and, consequently, prevented that very original development enjoyed by Western Europe. It began with the communal revolution, during which, thanks to the freedoms and rights the burghers snatched at arms' point, the institutional foundations of "civil society" were laid. This was a "society of industry, general competition, private enterprise freely pursuing its aims,"[62] i.e., a market-oriented

57. Already at the time of Maximilian I, a citizen of Ragusa had reached the same pessimistic conclusion as Busbecq: whereas the European countries were divided internally, "in the Turkish empire all the supreme authority is in the hands of a single man, everyone obeys the sultan, the sole ruler; all the revenues go to him; he is the master whereas all the others are his slaves." Cited from Fernand Braudel, *Civiltà e imperi del Mediterraneo all'epoca di Filippo II* (Turin: Einaudi, 1982), pp. 700-701.

58. Franco Cardini, *Noi e l'Islam*, *op. cit.*, p. 17.

59. Cipolla, *Vele e cannoni, op. cit.*, pp. 102-105.

60. Etienne Balazs, *La burocrazia celeste* (Milan: Il Saggiatore, 1971), p. 21.

61. "The failure of a merchant class to achieve state power was the fundamental reason for the failure of the development of modern science in China." Joseph Needham, *Scienza e società in Cina* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1973), p. 226.

62. Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *La sacra famiglia*, in *Opere complete* (Rome: Editori Riuniti, 1970ff.), Vol. IV, p. 136.

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society ruled by the entrepreneurial bourgeoisie, the leading actors of that inordinate, expansive metamorphosis called capitalism.[63]

To reiterate: technological superiority, thanks to which European powers were able to spread their tentacles over the entire planet between the 16th and 19th centuries, was the long-term consequence of the birth of autocephalous cities, of the formation of the rights-distributing society, and of the institutionalization of a protected space, the market, in which the bourgeoisie was able to launch capitalism.[64] Since in the *Dar al-Islam*, there was "no limit to the prince's arbitrary power,"[65] the development of the merchant cities, like the evolution of ideas, was inevitably delayed. Technological development was also delayed, because "when private industry was constrained, the industry of the State was not prompted to innovate technologically, and this was also a determining factor in its industrial decline."[66] Therefore, when Europe was laying the institutional foundations of its economic, scientific, and technological take-off, all closely linked to the birth and development of civil society, the culture of the *Dar al-Islam*, prisoner of what Lewis Mumford has called the megamachine — the despotic state, absolute master of the property and even the lives of its subjects[67] — was rapidly losing its creativity. It became a sterile "culture of comment,"[68] completely dominated by an oligarchy of theologians-jurists obsessively driven by the single aim of preventing "any reprehensible innovation (*bida*)."[69] In preserving the purity of the traditional way of life, the *ulama* prevented the "penetration of ideas and notions of investigation and discovery, of experimentation and

63. According to Marx: "The bourgeoisie cannot exist without constantly revolutionizing the means of production, and thereby the relations of production, and with them the whole of society. Conservation of old modes of production in unaltered form, was, on the contrary, the first condition of existence for all earlier industrial classes. Constant revolutionizing of production, uninterrupted disturbance of all social conditions, everlasting uncertainty and agitation distinguish the bourgeois epoch from all earlier ones. All frozen relations, with their ancient and venerable prejudices and opinions, are swept away . . . . The bourgeoisie, by the rapid improvement of all means of production, by the immensely facilitated means of communication, draws all, even the most barbarian, nations into civilization. The cheap prices of commodities are the heavy artillery with which it forces the barbarians' intensely obstinate hatred of foreigners to capitulate." See Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *Manifesto del Partito comunista*, in *Opere complete*, *op. cit.*, Vol. VI, pp. 489-490.

64. See Luciano Pellicani, *The Genesis of Capitalism and the Origins of Modernity* (New York: Telos Press, 1994).

65. Amin Maalouf, *Les Croisades vues par les Arabes*, *op. cit.*, pp. 301-302. While Maalouf recognizes that the lack of autonomous cities was one of the main causes of the decline of the Islamic world, this claim has been scornfully rejected by Giorgio Vercellin as "tainted by the usual Eurocentrism." See his *Istituzioni del mondo islamico*, *op. cit.*, p. 380.

66. Ashtor, *A Social and Economic History . . .* , *op. cit.*, p. 257.

67. See Alain Grosrichard, *Structure du sérail* (Paris: Seuil, 1979); Lucette Valensi, *Venise et la Sublime Porte* (Paris: Hachette,1987).

68. See Mohammed Abed al-Jabri, *La ragione araba* (Milan: Feltrinelli, 1996).

69. Antonio d'Emilia, *Diritto islamico*, in Giuseppe Tucci , ed., *Le civiltà dell'Oriente* (Rome: Casini, 1958), Vol. III, p. 506. See also Albert Hourani, *A History of the Arab People* (Cartine: John Flower 1991).

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evolution underpinning Western science and its techniques."[70]

Prisoners of the narcissistic cult of their own superiority, for centuries Muslims were unable to perceive the threat hanging over their world. It was only in 1798, when Napoleon went to Egypt, that they realized Europe had gained a humiliating and dangerous advantage.[71] This cultural shock forced them to ask the still unanswered question concerning their current dilemma: "How could the world have become hell for believers and paradise of non-believers?"[72] Suddenly, the *Dar al-Islam* was confronted with a challenge that threatened its very spiritual identity. It soon became obvious that, to meet the infidels' challenge, it was not enough to update technologically; it had to abandon a model of society "interested not in change but in the preservation of the existing order"[73] and start reshaping its institutions along the lines of the European model. In other words, it had to shatter the rigid crust of the *Sunna* and undertake the path of acculturation. The professional custodians of the *Sharia* had always obstinately refused to do so, convinced as they were that every novelty, however tiny, would have threatened the harmony of the sacred macrocosm in which they lived.[74]

The challenge faced by the *Dar al-Islam* the *Nahda* (Renaissance)[75] became clear once it was realized that the key element of modern Western civilization was not so much its formidable technology, forcing other civilizations to keep pace or be overpowered; it was also and above all the formidable driving power

70. Bernard Lewis, *The Muslim Discovery of Europe* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1982), p. 240.

71. Already during the reign of the sultan Abdul-Hamid I (1774-1789), the élites of the Ottoman Empire realized that Europe had acquired a considerable technological superiority; but it was impossible to initiate reform, because, *more solito*, the *ulama* accused the reformers "of undermining the religious and social foundations of the state" (Robert Mantran, *Les débuts de la Question d'Orient*, in Robert Mantran, ed., *Histoire de l'Empire ottoman* (Paris: Fayard, 1989), p. 424.

72. Noja, *L'Islam moderno*, *op. cit.*, p. 29.

73. Halil Inalcik, *The Ottoman Empire* (New Rochelle: Caratzas, 1989), p. 46.

74. The traditionalism of the Muslim élites was such that they rejected printing on the ground that it would have desacrilized *The Koran*; they also refused watches, because they would have undermined the authority of the *muezzins*. See Gilles Veinstein, "Introduction" to Mehmed Efendi, *Le paradis des infidèles* (Paris: La Découverte, 1981), pp. 9-10.

75. The imperialist character of modernity should not be understood in the demagogical sense dear to Third Worldists à la Wallerstein, who argue against all evidence that the economic well-being of capitalist countries depends on plundering the Third World. This is but an ideological weapon to make Westerners feel guilty and to keep the revolutionary flame burning, despite the integration of the "internal proletariat" thanks to democratic developments and the institutionalization of the welfare state. Western opulence is, first and foremost, the offspring of the Great Transformation, which so prodigiously increased the productivity of labor: science, technology, the world market, free initiatives, legal guarantees for private property are the endogenous factors which have enabled the Western world to take off, not the exploitation of the "external proletariat"; undoubtedly, there was some of this, but it played a very minor role in the Great Transformation. See Luciano Pellicani, *Le sorgenti della vita. Modi di produzione e forme di dominio* (Rome: Seam, 1997).

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of its spiritual culture. Modernity is a constitutionally imperialist civilization, whose central institution is the market. This market, *ex definitione*, has no borders: it is an institution with a planetary vocation, tending to submit everything it finds in its path to the impersonal imperatives of catalactic logic — interests, values, beliefs, institutions, consolidated practices, etc. — and advances like an enormous cultural avalanche. It is no coincidence that Marx defined capitalism a "permanent revolution."[76] Wherever capitalism has penetrated it has produced cataclysmic changes. Because of its "destructive creativity" and its inexorable dynamism, everyone on earth is forcedly incorporated in a single historical destiny, with the result that Western civilization has began to assail other cultures, confronting them with an immense challenge: either find a suitable "response" or be reduced the rank of colonies of the capitalist center.

This phenomenon is historically unique. There have been civilizations with great radioactive power, capable of radiating their culture outside the geographical area in which they developed; but none had the ability to permeate everywhere and to extend its multiform influence over the entire planet, attacking the genetic code of other civilizations. This is why relations between the West and the East have been characterized for centuries by permanent cultural aggression. Colonialism in its politico-military form has disappeared, but cultural colonialism has not. The Eastern populations have gained their independence, but are still faced with a tremendous challenge: an alien culture that submerges them with its impressive flow of techniques, commodities, messages, symbols and values, and that is profoundly altering their traditional way of life and their own self-image.

Toynbee's theory of cultural aggression helps understand the traumatic consequences of Western civilization's imperialistic intrusion in Islam.[77] Accordingly, when two civilizations meet, the one with a greater radioactive power causes a radical change in the other's imitative faculty, which turns from inside toward outside. Thus, the "inferior" civilization starts to imitate the alien way of life and takes it as its model. This is both because it is attracted by it and because it is forced to do so to escape its humiliating condition of material and psychological subjection. If this imitative process is initiated promptly, the "inferior" society can neutralize the outside threat. This is not easy, because to synchronize its development with that of the "superior" civilization it has to undergo rapid and radical changes in its internal organization and its specific forms of life. In other words, this means that an effective "response" to the external "challenge" must go through a radical institutional adjustment, comparable to a painful surgical operation. A classic example is the "Meiji revolution," thanks to which Japan managed to avert becoming a colony

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76. Karl Marx, *Lineamenti fondamentali della critica dell'economia politica* (Florence: La Nuova Italia, 1970), Vol. II, p. 12.

77. Arnold J. Toynbee, *A Study of History*, *op. cit.*, vol. VIII, pp. 454ff. Not one Islamicist has used Toynbee's analysis of cultural aggression. Even Huntington, who does cite Toynbee's *opus magnum*, has not appreciated its relevance.

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of Western powers by integrating alien cultural elements.

The response of an invaded civilization, however, is not always successful. Sometimes the society threatened by alien cultural influences is in a state of disintegration or at least decadence, or its basic structures are so rigid that it is impossible to graft foreign elements. In such cases, cultural aggression becomes a historical drama. The first impulse of the invaded society will be to put up obstinate and resentful resistance to the intrusion, seen as an attack against its fundamental values and thus perverting its spiritual identity. At the same time, the impact will condition the way the invading culture is received, and its elements will have different speeds and powers of penetration. So, instead of a programmed and harmonious process of acculturation, there will be isolated cultural fragments whose long-term effects cannot be controlled.

Toynbee claims that cultural aggression is based on three disturbing laws. According to the first, the power of penetration of a cultural element is proportional to its degree of futility and superficiality. This has devastating consequences: it means that the invaded society is objectively unable to avoid the influence of the invading culture and will end up accepting those elements it considers easiest to imitate or less undesirable. So the forced acculturation process will lead to a reverse selection; the inferior elements end up as the first that become integrated into the body of the invaded society. In fact, and this is the second law of cultural aggression, a cultural element that has been either innocuous or highly beneficial in its original social body tends to produce new and devastating effects in a social body it enters as an exotic and isolated intruder. The third law follows from this: the characteristic of the cultural reception is that "one thing leads to another," since a culture is not an aggregate, but a system, whose elements are interrelated. Therefore, the invaded society's efforts to prevent the penetration of undesirable cultural elements are destined to fail. Once initiated, the acculturation process is unstoppable, and any attempts to curb it will only end up making things more painful.

When it is obvious that acculturation is inevitable and the self-determination of the society struck by alien influences is fast disappearing, the "Herodian party" is created to oppose the "zealots' party": instead of obstinately refusing the alien culture, the "Herodians" support an intentional and planned acculturation. To prevent outsiders from colonizing them, they do all they can to stimulate self-colonization. But, in the fundamentalists' view, this self-colonization appears to lead directly to the annihilation of the specific spiritual features of their macrocosm, leading to the inevitable battle between modernizers and traditionalists. For the former, salvation can only be achieved by attending the school of modern civilization to grasp the secret of its power; for the second, everything that comes from outside is poisonous to traditional forms of life. They claim there is only one way to prevent a cultural disaster: to expel the invader and seal the borders, so that no one and nothing can pollute and corrupt their macrocosm.

Toynbee's analysis of cultural invasions is clearly an ideal-typical one, yet

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there is an empirical base which he used to develop his laws. What he describes is mainly, if not exclusively, the cultural penetration of modern industrial civilization in Third World countries and its destructive effects. Such a penetration not only has destroyed the institutions, customs, and values of those it found in its path, but has also tortured human beings, depriving them of their ancestral habitat and condemned them to live in a world that gradually became extraneous or even hostile. By attacking societies outside its own area of endogenous development, capitalism has uprooted millions of human beings, transforming them into a gigantic, alienated, and, because of this, resentful mass. For generations, these millions of individuals have constituted the "external proletariat" of Western civilization.

It is not surprising that the Muslims' existential conditions are still marked by their "immense sense of frustration and anger,"[78] and the fact that they experience the West as both an oppressive and intrusive presence: oppressive, for its overwhelming material superiority; intrusive, because modernity constitutes a permanent threat to the traditional forms of life in the *Dar al-Islam*. For the Muslims, these traditional forms of life are divine in origin and, as such, cannot be criticized, even less modified. The *Sharia* is the "way" that God has opened up to humans, and they cannot move away from it without "committing a sin, because there is no law of which God is not part."[79] In Islam, law and religion cannot be separated, since juridical matters (*fiqh*) concern the study and knowledge of Divine Law and are thus a theological branch, which makes "Muslim law a particularly significant example of holy law."[80] Consequently, "religion is not a component or dimension of life, governing some issues and from which other affairs are excluded: it concerns existence as a whole, in a total and not limited jurisdiction. In this kind of society, the idea of separation between church and state is meaningless, because there is no distinction between them. Church and state, political and religious authority, are the same thing."[81] This explains Muslim societies' stubborn resistance to modernity understood as "life without sacred values,"[82] or at least a strict separation between politics and religion. Typically, the modern state is secular, and does not identify with any particular religious creed. Therefore, it recognizes the legitimacy of all religions. It is the exact opposite of the state as conceived in the *Dar al-Islam*, the institution entrusted with guaranteeing the rule of the Divine Law.[83] Thus, according to Khomeini: "Islam is either political or it is nothing." This is perfectly consistent with the entire

78. Maxime Rodinson, *Gli Arabi* (Florence: Sansoni, 1980), p. 104.

79. David de Santillana, "Diritto e Società," in Thomas Arnold and Alfred Guillaume, ed., *L'eredità dell'Islam* (Milano: Vallardi, 1962), p. 303.

80. Joseph Schacht, *Introduzione al diritto musulmano* (Turin: Fondazione Agnelli, 1995), p. 1.

81. Bernard Lewis, "The Return of Islam," in *Commentary*, Vol. I (1976), p. 42.

82. José Ortega y Gasset, "Una interpretacion de la historia universal," in *Obras completas* (Madrid: Revista de Occidente, 1965), Vol. IX, p. 130.

83. Schacht, *Introduzione al diritto musulmano*, *op. cit.*, p. 2.

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Islamic tradition, for which religion and state — *din wa dawlah* — are a single thing. Any attempt to separate temporal from spiritual power can only be considered an impious distancing from the "static and immutable" Divine Law."[84] It also means that the principles of the *Sharia* and modernity are incompatible.[85] Modernity is inseparable from the secularization process, which severed the organic link between the state and religion, and transformed the latter into a private matter. But a religion reduced to a private matter is precisely what rigorous Muslims cannot accept, because it implies abandoning the *Sharia*.

The Kemalist revolution managed to construct a "complete laicism"[86] on the ruins of the Ottoman Empire. This typically "Herodian" response to Western cultural aggression, however, has not taken place anywhere else outside of the Turkish borders. It is an exception linked to an exceptional man, Kemal Ataturk, who, thanks to his charismatic personality and the enormous prestige he enjoyed for saving the Turkish nation from European powers, managed to bring about a radical break away from the *Sharia*. He injected into the political-military class he had forged the idea that "Turkey is worthy of Western civilization,"[87] and that he would demonstrate it by Europeanizing its institutions. Accordingly, he abolished the caliphate, suppressed religious orders, eliminated any connection between Islam and the state, introduced the Latin alphabet and adopted codes modeled on those of European countries.[88] Thus, the slogan with which Ziya Gokalp, the most lucid and influential ideologist of modern Turkey, summarized the historical significance of the Kemalist revolution: "To belong to the Turkish nation, the Islamic religion, and European civilization."[89]

The new Turkey, born from the Kemalist revolution, shows that the spiritual and institutional wall separating Islam and modernity can be demolished;[90] but it

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84. N. J. Coulson, *A History of Islamic Law* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1991), p. 2.

85. Thus, in 1989, the Turkish Constitutional Council stated that "the republic and democracy are antithetical to the *Sharia* regime." Cited in Gilles Kepel, *Jihad*, *op. cit.*, p. 397.

86. Alessandro Bausani, *L'Islam* (Milano: Garzanti, 1987), p. 192.

87. Alexandre Jevakhoff, *Kemal Ataturk* (Paris: Tallandier, 1989), p. 395.

88. See Bernard Lewis, *The Emergence of Modern Turkey* (London: Oxford University Press, 1968).

89. Cited in Maxime Rodinson, *Islam e capitalismo* (Turin: Einaudi, 1968), p. 148.

90. According to Gianni Baget Bozzo, this was possible since "Turkey has taken over a tradition of the Byzantine Empire, i.e., right from the beginning it incorporated an element of political autonomy." *Di fronte all'Islam* (Genoa: Marietti, 2001), p. 114. This claim is difficult to accept for at least two reasons. First, the subordination of religious to temporal power, typical of the Byzantine world, has a long history in the Islamic world. Second, the secular character of the state is not based on the autonomy of its hierocratic institutions, but on the decision to regard religion as a private affair. This is extraneous not only to Islam, but also to Christianity, as historically defined since the Edict of Theodosius (380), with which non-Catholic Christians were called "demented and crazed" and their heresy seen as a crime against the state. See Marcel Pacaut, *La téocratie* (Paris: Desclée, 1989), p. 17.

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also demonstrates that it is an enormously difficult task.[91] Several times, the army was forced to intervene to defend Kemal Ataturk's legacy against the Islamists of the Party of Prosperity (*Refah*), whose aim was to transform the secular state into a confessional one. Their model was Khomeini's Iranian Republic, created by the first and most spectacular victory of fundamentalism. Khomeini had clearly seen that the shah's economic and technological modernization would not have been limited to increasing the country's productive ability. By opening the doors to secular-scientific culture it would have gradually delegitimated religious tradition, irredeemably undermining the core of Iranian identity. The intrusion of modern civilization had to be stopped before it was too late, i.e., before the thinking underpinning the West's economic and technical models took over. He thought that the only way to "protect Islam"[92] and to stop Iran from leaving the *Sharia* was to raise an impenetrable barrier against alien cultural elements. Since the "Western infection" had already affected Iranian society, he emphasized that, for a Muslim, there could no "other party than the party of God,"[93] and that the only legitimate government was that of "the *Sharia*."[94] He called for a "spiritual purification" based on the ethical and religious imperative of mercilessly punishing the "bearers of Evil" or the elements contaminated by the perverted habits of "capitalists, worshippers of money."[95] The aim was to expel everything that polluted the *Umma*, and restore the *Velayat-i faqih*, the absolute and integral rule of the True Religion (*Din Hanif*) and of those dedicated to studying *The Koran*: the "Law experts."[96] In short, to stop the modernization and secularization process, it was necessary to reject whatever was connected to "pagan" Western civilization. Khomeini did not hesitate to install a regime of "terror, fear and revenge,"[97] encouraging all spheres of society to denounce each other,[98] and unleashing the "mobile troops of God's rage" against all those who dared oppose the ayatollahs' theocratic government.

But Khomeini did not just erect a firm barrier to stop the *Umma*'s spiritual

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91. Whereas the Indian Union modeled their political institutions on Western democracy, the other country born from the British Raj , Pakistan, actually rejected them and in 1965 proclaimed the *Sharia* as state law.

92. Khomeyni, *Il governo islamico* (Rome: Libreria Editrice Europa, n. d.), p. 97.

93. Chapour Haghighat, *Iran, la révolution islamique* (Brussels: Editions Complexe, 1985), p. 20.

94. Khomeyni, *Il governo islamico*, *op. cit.*, p. 69.

95. Cited in Rafael Gomez Parra, *Jomeini, el profeta de la guerra* (Barcellona: Ediciones B, 1989), p. 140.

96. Khomeini, *Il governo islamico*, *op. cit.*, p. 96.

97. This is how, in an open letter to Rafsanjani, Mehdi Bazargan denounced Khomeini's efforts to purify Iran. Cited from Shaul Bakhash, *The Reign of the Ayatollahs* (London: Unwin, 1985), p. 227.

98. Khomeini's moral terrorism was so insidious that he could boast that while the shah had needed the secret police, "the Islamic republic could rely on a nation composed of 36 million informers."

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pollution.[99] He planned to have Islam lead "all the disinherited people of the Earth,"[100] thus substituting the revolutinary role of Soviet Communism. This grandiose program was clearly articulated in the letter he sent to Gorbachev shortly before he died. In it, the charismatic leader of the Iranian theocracy asks the secretary of the CPSU to recognize publicly that communism was now just a historical fossil because, lacking a "true belief in God," it had "the same problem that is driving the West to worthlessness and dead ends"; and to recognize also that Islam was the only spiritual force left in the world capable of pursuing the goal of freeing those in the "prison of the West and the Great Satan."[101] Such a program constitues a real declaration of war of the sacred against the profane,[102] whose objective is a planetary revolution "against Western civilization, fought not only because of its perversions, but also because of its principles."[103] Contrary to Cardini, these principles are not rejected because they are a "corollary and the consequence of the Christian essence of the West,"[104] but because they are "secular," the expression of a civilization that, while " proclaiming itself Christian, goes against Christ's teaching,"[105] because it claims that "religion has to be separated from politics."[106] In the words of the Arab philosopher Sadik J. Al-Azm, radical Islamicists condemn "the culture, civilization and society of their century as pagan, apostate, infidel and Godless."[107]

The "Islamicists' ideology is based on a contraposition of post-Koranic and pre-Islamic history, using the concept of *jahiliyya* to denote everything negative, and therefore all the values of the secularized West."[108] The leader of the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS), Abbasi Madani, is clear enough on the need to "purge the state of elements hostile to religion."[109] In a 1989 interview to *Algérie actualité*, he said "The moral crisis is the logical and inevitable consequence of secularism and materialism. This paradox, established and imposed on humanity by a blind and

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99. In the *Dar al-Islam,* the power of the jurists-theologians has always been subordinate to the power of the caliphs and sultans. Thus, Khomeini's revolution has produced something new: the theocratic government of *Sharia* experts. See Farhad Khosrokhavar, *L'utopie sacrifiée* (Paris: Presses de la Fondation Nationale des Sciences Politiques, 1993).

100. Khomeini, *Lettera al Papa* (Parma: Il Veltro, 1980), p. 8.

101. Khomeini, *Lettera a Gorbaciov* (Parma: Il Veltro,1989), pp. 9-10.

102. See Gilles Kepel, *La rivincita di Dio* (Milan: Rizzoli, 1991).

103. Roger Garaudy, *Intégrismes* (Paris: Belfond, 1990), p. 88.

104. Cardini, *Noi e l'Islam*, *op. cit.*, p. 98.

105. Khomeini, *Lettera al Papa*, *op. cit.*, p. 15.

106. Khomeini, *Lettera a Gorbaciov*, *op. cit.*, p. 16.

107. Al-Azm, *L'Illuminismo islamico*, *op. cit.*, p. 21.

108. Khaled Fouad Allam, "L'Islam contemporaneo," in Giovanni Filoramo, ed., *Islam* (Bari: Laterza, 2000), p. 257.

109. As part of his plan to "purify" customs, Madani called for the abolition of the study of French, the shutdown of television stations, and strict controls on tourism; i.e., the "closure" of Algerian society in order to prevent it from being contaminated by "materialistic" modern civilization.

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lame West, is the source of the profound rupture between reason and revelation. The West has rejected revelation, venerated reason and worshipped matter."

Madani's attack on modern civilization's "secularism," "rationalism," and "materialism" is nothing new. It can be found already in innumerable writings of "zealots" in response to Western cultural aggression — all obsessed with the idea that the spiritual integrity of the Islamic people is threatened by a "Godless civilization," predicated on "secularism-individualism."[110] Even at the end of the 19th century, the Moroccan historian Ahmed al-Nasiri was admonishing his co-religionists: "You should know that this freedom of which the Europeans speak is undoubtedly an atheist invention, because it is contrary to the laws of God, family, and man himself."[111]

How could it be otherwise? As René Guénon[112] put it, Islam is a strictly traditional civilization; thus it sees a Western society that denies the sacredness of tradition as a perverted system, based on the Satanic cult of reason, materialism, and the denial of the "yearning for eternal life."[113] The "disenchantment of the world" has not only secularized culture in the West, emancipating intellectual production from the control of hierocratic institutions, but it has also privatized faith. This is something which has always horrified the guardians of the *Sharia,* who interpret it as a return to *jahilyya* — the dark age of unbelief and idolatry, before the message of the "seal of the prophets." The very idea, typical of modern liberal democracy, that law is made by humans, is blasphemous for those who, like orthodox Muslims, consider that "legislative power is reserved for God,"[114] and, consequently, see it as the Divine Word (*Kalam Allah*). Only one attitude is possible: unconditional obedience or Islam, i.e., the denial of individualism, seen as an entropic agent, a generator of *fitna*, as intellectual and moral anarchy, which has always been Islam's deepest dread.[115] Since individualism, the "freedom of modern people," is the fundamental value of Western civilization, orthodox Muslims see it as a permanent threat to their ethical-religious macrocosm, entirely ruled by the "sense of the Absolute";[116] in other words, as an attack on their cultural identity, inextricably linked to Revelation. This has been put best in a 1930 article in the Egyptian newspaper *Al-Fath*: "Overall, the territory dominated by colonialism is small; the day will come when the landowner will be able to recover what has been stolen from him. But that the invaders can

110. See Renzo Guolo, *Il partito di Dio. L'Islam radicale contro l'Occidente* (Milan: Guerini, 1994).

111. Cited in Laroui, *Islam et modernité*, *op. cit.*, pp. 47-48.

112. René Guénon, *Orient et Occident* (Paris: Editions de la Maisnie, 1987).

113. Khomeini, *Lettera a Gorbaciov*, *op. cit.*, p. 13.

114. Khomeini, *Il governo islamico*, *op. cit.*, pp. 69-70.

115. Mernissi has defined Islam as "a long cry against individualism and its arrogance" aimed, through the "annihilation of individuality before Allah," at constructing an ethical-religious community based on equality. See her *La peur-modernité*, *op. cit.*, p. 146.

116. Frithjof Schuon, *Comprendere l'Islam* (Milan: SE, 1989), p. 29.

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colonize the hearts of men and women, this is the ultimate damage, the final disaster. The real danger is posed by the spiritual war that Europe is methodically waging against the souls of Orientals in general and of Muslims in particular, aided and abetted by its works of philosophy, its novels, its theatre, its films and its language. The aim of this concerted action is psychological: to wrench the people of the East from their past."[117]

It is no surprise that, with the sole exception of Turkey, the "Herodian" intelligentsia has always been a small minority in the countries of the *Dar al-Islam*, unable to channel the masses toward modernity — especially since modernity has encroached upon Muslim life, not only as a secularized civilization based on enlightened reason and individual liberty, but also as an imperialist power driven by a boundless desire for domination.[118] This is why the "aggressive shock of the modern West has provoked an endemic state of crisis in the Islamic world, varying according to political and social circumstances, proving that it has not really managed to adapt to the dominant modernity."[119]

So-called "Arab Socialism" was (if only because it challenged the battle cry of the Muslim Brotherhood: "No constitution other than the *The Koran*") an attempt to secularize the structures of Islam. Yet, it was destined to fail, because it did not follow the "Turkish way" to modernity but, instead, declared war on the West and rejected its fundamental institutions, from parliamentary democracy to the market. In particular, "Nasser pushed his nationalization program to the limits, presenting it as a means for disarming the capitalists, enemies of the revolution and of Arab union."[120] The result was that, instead of encouraging the development of civil society, without which no kind of modernization is possible, Nasserism condemned any tendency toward capitalism and liberalism as counter-revolutionary, and turned against the entrepreneurial bourgeoisie. By establishing strict "supervision of the state over industrial and commercial enterprises and over the life of citizens within the framework of the single party,"[121] it suffocated the Egyptian economy with a colossal bureaucratic apparatus.

Naturally, the disastrous outcome of a revolution aimed at the absolute domination of the party over society and of the state over the economy presented a great opportunity for traditionalists: an opportunity to preach to an increasingly frustrated and resentful audience that the salvation of Muslim peoples was not to be sought in the blasphemous imitation of the "infidels," but in the restoration of the fundamental principles of Islam. Hence, they demanded the institutionalization

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117. Cited from G. E. von Grunebaum, *L'identité culturelle de l'Islam* (Paris: Gallimard, 1973), p. 166.

118. Hichem Djait, *Europe and Islam* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985).

119. Roger Du Pasquier, *Il risveglio dell'Islam* (Turin: Edizioni Paoline, 1990), p. 40.

120. Nazih N. Ayubi, "Dalla burocrazia alla privatizzazione," in *Stato ed economia nel mondo arabo* (Turin: Fondazione Giovanni Agnelli, 1993), p. 37.

121. Gardet, *La Cité musulmane*, *op. cit.*, pp. 387-388.

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of what Mernissi has called the *hijab*, i.e., a spiritual shield to stop the absorption of ideas and values from the *Gharb* — "the Arab name for the West, a place of shadows and incomprehension."[122] Whereas traditionalists only demanded that peoples of the *Dar al-Islam* should not let themselves be contaminated by the "impure" habits of the peoples of the *Dar al-kufr*, the fundamentalists went further. They claimed that Islam had to abandon its defensive position and militarize in order to conquer and destroy the *Dar al-kufr*. Their slogans were: "Contemporary society is pagan, we have to make it a *tabula rasa*"; "There are only two parties: the party of God and that of Satan; the former has to wage a relentless and merciless holy war everywhere until the government of God is installed."[123]

This is clearly a war-cry against modern civilization;[124] it is equally clear that it is the resumption of the Muslim Brotherhood's program — the association founded in 1929 by the Egyptian Hasan al-Banna, "mother of all Arab fundamentalisms"[125] — explained by their greatest theorist, Sayyid Qutb, as follows: "Islam is forced to fight by its own goal, i.e., to guide the human race. War is an individual obligation against obstacles to preaching, but under the collective form of a select, well-organized and cohesive group. The adversaries are also individuals, grouped into classes, states and coalitions. The *jihad*, in turn, is absolutely necessary. It is a permanent world *jihad*. Thus, to be a Muslim means to be a warrior, a community of permanently true warriors, ready to be used or not used by God, if He wants and when He wants, because only He is the leader of the battle."[126]

This means that one cannot claim that the fundamentalists' goal is the re-Islamicization of the societies and states of the *Dar al-Islam*;[127] their program is much more ambitious and disturbing: they want a religious war to conquer the world and establish the rule of the *Sharia* over all of humanity. In other words, besides demanding the restoration of the *Dar al-Adl* — the House of Justice as conceived by the Prophet — they want to annihilate the source of pollution of the *Umma*: the secularized West. Therefore, the *jihadists* are now engaged on two fronts: against "apostate" governments that, while proclaiming themselves to be Muslim, have actually left the "path" prefigured by Revelation by suspending the *Sharia* and replacing it with "a civil law created by man"[128]; and against what

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122. Mernissi, *La peur-modernité*, *op. cit.*, p. 21.
123. Al-Ashmawy, *L'Islam politique*, *op. cit.*, p. 26.
124. Enzo Pace sees in fundamentalism a "central aspect of modernity, an extremely modern form which allows the articulation of socio-religious conflicts and the relation between religion and politics. Thus, it is not a figure of the past, an archaic model unable to understand and desire modernity, but a system of ideas and behaviors that accepts the challenges of the complex society." *Il regime della verità* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1990), p. 9.
125. Sadik J. Al-Azm, *L'Illuminismo islamico*, *op. cit.*, p. 8.
126. Khaled Fouad Allam, *L'Islam contemporaneo*, *op. cit.*, pp. 271-272.
127. Ali Merad, *L'Islam contemporain* (Paris: PUF, 1992), p. 118.
128. Osama bin Laden, *Dichiarazione di guerra contro gli Americani*, in Massimo Introvigne, *Osama bin Laden*, *op. cit.*, p. 72.

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Osama bin Laden has called the Great Disbeliever: America, the greatest power in that world that they want to raze to the ground. Thus, their holy war is both a civil war, i.e., a war between Muslims, more precisely a war by the religious to take power away from the military, and an international war waged with the only weapon available to the militants of *Hizb Allah*: terrorism.

If the war in progress is really twofold, in the sense that it is waged against both the "external" and the "internal" West, then its outcome depends not only on the ability of the Western powers to combine military and political means[129] to eradicate the *jihadists*' global terrorism; it also depends on which interpretation of *The Koran* prevails in the Islamic world. At the moment, the balance is decidedly in favor of the "zealots," ready to do anything to avoid being colonized by what they consider an impious and contaminating society. This does not mean, however, that the "Herodians" strategy is destined to fail in the long run. It should not be forgotten that, although Christ said "give back to Caesar what belongs to Caesar, and to God what belongs to God," thus supporting the principle of separation of religion and politics, for over a thousand years the state in Europe has been a confessional state, engaged in the merciless repression of heretics and atheists by means of torture, burnings, and exterminations. The powerful theocratic and integrational vocation of the Catholic Church, articulated by the famous *Dictatus Papae* in which Gregory VII proclaimed, *urbi et orbi*, that the Roman pontiff, "as the direct successor of St. Peter, had inherited sovereign powers embracing every aspect of Christian life, from the cradle to the grave."[130] This is because, "according to the doctrine universally accepted in the Middle Ages, Christians and the Church were outside the natural line of evolution, growth and expansion: they were governed by divine life-norms."[131] This made Christianity an "ecclesiological society regulated by laws which, of basically divine origin, were promulgated by the appropriate ecclesiastical bodies."[132] Thus, nothing could escape the Church's jurisdiction: its authority was absolute and total, and questioning its infallibility[133] meant placing oneself outside ecclesiological society, established by God to lead the people to salvation. In other words, it meant taking the road of impiety. For the impious, as St.Augustine clearly theorized, there could be nothing but persecution. When heresy

129. It is difficult to think that the *jihadists* can be defeated until the "Palestinian wound" has healed, i.e., until the Palestinians' right to have their own state has been recognized. This means that the first ethical-political duty of America is to do everything in its power to induce the Israelis to find a *modus vivendi* with the Arabs.

130. Walter Ullmann, *A Short History of the Papacy in the Middle Ages* (London: Methuen, 1972), p. 174.

131. Walter Ullmann, *Medieval Foundations of Renaissance Humanism* (London: Elek, 1977), p. 23.

132. *Ibid.*, p. 13.

133. "That the Roman Church has never been wrong; nor will it ever be wrong in all eternity, the Scripture bearing witness." (*Dictatus Papae*, XXII).

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threatened, Innocent III brought in the Inquisition which, thanks to the collaboration between temporal and spiritual power, waged a permanent war not only against heretics, but also against the possibility of even thinking outside the rigid orthodoxy imperially fixed by the Church.[134]

In a symbolic universe so structured, the secular city's typical separation of religion and politics was literally unthinkable.[135] Although distinct from spiritual power, temporal power was subordinated to it and had to play the role of the secular arm of the charismatic institution, the Church, that claimed the monopoly of the correct interpretation of the Holy Scriptures. As Hans Kung wrote, "Rome has never recognized the separation of powers; it has denied it even when, in our times, it was implemented by modern states. The Pope is and remains the supreme head, the absolute legislator and the maximum judge."[136] Although the famous theory of the two swords was elaborated within the Roman-Catholic paradigm, it was not understood as the separation between religious and political jurisdiction; but in the sense that the emperor's secular sword was "to be used according to the Pope's will."[137] As in the Islamic world, the mediaeval Christian world was a universe supported by divine laws and, as such, hostile to the autonomy of society and politics; it was also hostile to freedom of thought, in which it could see only an impious estrangement from "God-given Truth."[138] Thus, if Islam is defined,

134. Starting with the phrase *compelle intrari* in the parable of the supper (Luke, XIV, 23), the bishop of Ippona reached the following conclusion: "There is an injust persecution, that of the impious against the Church of Christ; and there is a just persecution, which is what the Churches of Christ carry out against the impious. . . . The Church persecutes out of love, the impious out of wickedness." Quoted in Henry Kamen, *Nascita della tolleranza* (Milan: Il Saggiatore, 1967), p. 15. The "impious" are the Christians who obstinately refuse the orthodox interpretation of the Holy Scripture, who have to be forced to acknowledge their error on the basis of Augustine's direct reasoning with a heretic: "You wanted to throw yourself in the water to die: you have been saved despite yourself, in order to prevent you from death. You acted in accordance with your will, but for your loss; your will has been opposed, but for your salvation. . . . If, therefore, temporal salvation can require the violation of human freedom from those who love you, how much more can the same needs be imposed by eternal salvation and the fear of eternal death." Cited in Henry Maisonneuve, *L'Inquisition* (Paris: Desclée, 1989), pp. 15-16. Given these claims, it is not surprising that Peter Brown has called Augustine "the first theoretician of the Inquisition."

135. So much so that "the theoreticians of pontifical supremacy went as far as claiming that the Pope was the true emperor." See G. C. Merlo, "Il cristianesimo medievale in Occidente," in Giovanni Filoramo, ed., *Cristianesimo* (Bari: Laterza, 2000), p. 164.

136. Hans Kung, *Cristianesimo* (Milan: Rizzoli, 1999), p. 395.

137. *Ibid.*, p. 394.

138. Bossuet has also provided a particularly instructive definition of a Catholic: "A heretic is someone who has an opinion, as the word indicates. What does it mean, to have an opinion? It means to follow one's particular thoughts and feelings. But the Catholic is catholic, i.e., universal, and, without any particular thoughts, follows the Church." Cited from Paul Hazard, *La crisi della coscienza europea* (Milan: Il Saggiatore, 1968), p. 247.

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with Baget Bozzo, as a "dictatorship of religion over life,"[139] then this definition has to be extended also to Christianity,[140] and Judaism, which Kung has labelled the "paradigm of the theocratic community."[141]

The Arab historian Burhan Ghalioun has argued against the time-honored cliché that "in principle, Christianity would be in favor of a clear separation of the reign of God and the political reign." According to him, "history suggests precisely the opposite. It is in reaction to the Church's claim of the supremacy of the religious over the political that the rebirth of the state assumed a secular, i.e, antireligious form five centuries ago. The will to install a theocratic state has been gradually, but forcefully opposed by an even more vigorous will to free the state from the yoke of the Church. In Europe, evangelization is followed, like an echo, by secularization. It is during this historical dialectic that the secular imposes itself as an ideology of separation."[142]

But the state was not the only protagonist in the laicization that led to the secular city. The market made an even more decisive contribution to emancipating society from the control of hierocratic institutions. The communal revolution, which created independent cities, also created a new class, that of the *mercatores,* not even contemplated by the clerics' three functional orders of *oratores*, *bellatores*, and *laboratores*. This gradually introduced an important distinction between religion's (sacred) time and business' (profane) time[143] that was to have enormous consequences for the evolution of European civili-

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139. Baget Bozzo, *Di fronte all'Islam*, *op. cit.*, p. 111. On the other hand, Bani Sadr defined *The Koran* as "a theory of liberation." *Le Coran et le pouvoir* (Paris: Imago, 1993), p. 205.

140. In 1930, Pius XI did not hesitate to claim that: "If there is a totalitarian regime — totalitarian *de facto* and *de jure* — it is the regime of the Church, since man totally belongs to the Church." Quoted in Gaetano Pecora, "Organicismo antico e moderno," in Luciano Pellicani, ed., *La storia fra passato e presente* (Soveria Mannelli: Rubbettino, 2001), p. 187.

141. Hans Kung, *L'ebraismo* (Milan: Rizzoli, 1993), p. 129. Here, Hume's observation in his *Natural History of Religion* may be useful: "The intolerance of almost all religions, which have maintained the unity of God, is as remarkable as the polytheists' contrary principle. The Jews' implacable narrow spirit is well-known. Mohammedanism set out with still more bloody principles; and even to this day, deals out damnation, though not fire and faggot, to all other sects. And if, among Christians, the English and Dutch have embraced the principles of toleration, this singularity has proceeded from the steady resolution of the civil magistrate, in opposition to the continued efforts of priests and bigots."

142. Burhan Ghalioun, *Islam e islamismo*, *op. cit.*, p. 92. Less polemical, but identical in substance, is what the prince of Jordan pointed out to Westerners: "After all, secularization developed in Europe during the violent 16th century religious wars to open an area of political neutrality for the various forms of Christianity to live together." El Hassan bin Talal, *Essere musulmano* (Milan: Bompiani, 2001), p. 61. In turn, Al-Azm has remarked that "the same type of fundamentalism now present in the Muslim Arab countries existed in Europe in the 19th century, as demonstrated by the *Syllabus of Modern Errors* published by Pope Pius IX in 1864." See *L'Illuminismo islamico*, *op. cit.*, p. 21.

143. Jacques Le Goff, *Tempo della Chiesa e tempo del mercante* (Turin: Einaudi, 1977).

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zation. The Church claimed it had the right and duty to monopolize the management of time, since it belonged to God and not to man. But, business time could not be ruled by an economic Petrinism that condemned the unlimited desire for wealth (*avaritia*) and interest (*usura*), the daily fare of the entrepreneurial bourgeoisie; business time could only be rationally used by respecting the amoral and a-religious laws of the market, which constituted an authentic profanation of time; and since time and life cannot be divided, this profanation had to be extended to life. As market economy and the entrepreneurial bourgeoisie gradually developed, the culture of the Christian West became increasingly secular. At the same time, the sphere of the holy, which once covered the entire life of the faithful, contracted, as did the Church's jurisdiction. So *homo naturalis*, whose sinful passions the Church had always fought was, "after centuries of hibernation," progressively "restored and rehabilitated."[144] Europe then began that march which was to take it from an "ecclesiological society" entirely saturated with the holy to a "secular society" centered on the lay state and on institutionalizing and universalizing rights and freedoms. It was a march lasting centuries, punctuated by bitter conflicts, because Christian integralism — Protestant no less than Catholic — fiercely resisted society's emancipation from the tutelage of hierocratic institutions. "The Italian Renaissance contained all the positive forces to which we owe modern culture: i.e., freedom of thought, disdain for authority, the triumph of education over the arrogance of lineage, enthusiasm for science and man's scientific past, the unshackling of the individual. . . . By contrast, the German Reformation stands out as an energetic protest of backward minds who had not yet had their fill of the medieval vision. . . . With their northern strength and obstinacy, they set man back, forced the Counter Reformation, i.e., a defensive Catholic Christianity, with the violence of a state of siege."[145]

These were the years of atrocious religious wars, during which intolerance, theological fanaticism and hate — permanent temptations of all monotheist religions[146] — were endemic, and the process of secularization was halted or at

144. Walter Ullmann, "Origini medievali del Rinascimento," in *Il Rinascimento* (Bari: Laterza, 1983), pp. 67 and 76.

145. Friedrich Nietzsche, *Umano, troppo umano* (Milan: Mondadori, 1970), Vol. I, p. 160.

146. In the sacred texts of great monotheistic religions — Judaism, Christianity and Islam — apostasy is an unforgivable sin liable to capital punishment. The horror aroused by Khomeini when he called on "true believers" to kill Salman Rushdie, the author of *The Satanic Verses*, proves the enormous distance there is today between current Western values and the teachings of the Bible. A confirmation of this is provided by the following passage from the *Letter to the Jews*: "A man who has violated Moses law dies without mercy at the testimony of two or three witnesses. How much worse punishment do you think will be deserved by the man who has spurned the Son of God, and has profaned the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has outraged the spirit of grace? For we know him who said, 'Vengeance is mine'."

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least delayed. "On the eve of the French Revolution, all European societies were still confessional: everywhere religion was closely interwoven with social life, it was associated with power and legitimated it, it was present in all collective affairs, directing social activities as well as private behavior."[147] But it had lost the élites' intellectual and moral leadership, and was defending itself against Enlightenment philosophers, who claimed that both the "sanctity of religion" and the "majesty of legislation"[148] had to be submitted to reason's "free and public censure." They also claimed that humanity was mature enough to graduate from "a civilization founded on the idea of duty, duties toward God, the sovereign, . . . to a civilization founded on the idea of rights: the rights of individual conscience, criticism, reason, the rights of people and citizens."[149] At the same time, the industrial revolution relentlessly made "everything that was established and measured by the various social orders evaporate, every sacred thing was deconsecrated and people were forced to consider their position in life without any illusion."[150] In other words, they were forced to leave the theocentric vision of the world and enter a cultural universe in which the sacred no longer coincided with life .

This is why Islam sees the West as a perverted world, which has turned its back on God, and the West sees Islam as a kind of "historical fossil," precisely because Islam still has that religious integralism the West has laboriously eliminated.[151] This explains the incompatibility in principle between Islam and the West, which can only be overcome if and when the "Herodian" party persuades Muslims to accept the idea that secularization does not mean the elimination of religion from society, but interpreting religion as an individual fact and the strict separation between the sacred and politics.[152] This separation is the only antidote to monotheistic religions' powerful totalitarian temptation, which are driven by their inner logic toward inquisition, i.e., toward the tyrannical power of those who, certain of being the favored bearers of the "Truth which saves," think that they have the right and duty to impose their dogma and values on others. This is

147. René Rémond, *La secolarizzazione* (Bari: Laterza, 1999), p. 14.
148. Immanuel Kant, *Critica della ragion pura* (Turin: Utet, 1967), p. 65.
149. Hazard, *La crisi della coscienza europea*, *op. cit.*, pp. 12-13.
150. Marx and Engels, *Manifesto*, *op. cit.*, p. 489.
151. According to cultural relativists, the West has no right to proclaim its superiority over Islam. If such were the case, it would follow that today's West is not superior to the 16th century West, where the suspicion of heresy was enough to lead to the accused being burned alive. It would also follow that the battles, thanks to which the civilization of law and liberty has been established, were senseless, since all cultural traditions are equal.
152. Unlike what it happening in Europe — where new generations are turning their back on God — in America "religion still plays an important role in the private sphere . . . since Americans think that individuals have to forge their own religious convictions independently of any church." See Georges Minois, *Storia dell'ateismo* (Rome: Editori Riuniti, 2000); and Isabel Richet, *La religion aux Etats Unis* (Parigi: PUF, 2001), pp. 104 and 67. This kind of religion is consistent with the values of the secular city.

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a great moral lesson of the history of Western civilization. [153] It is also the lesson found in *The Koran*, where the *sura* of "The Cow" says: "There is no compulsion in religion."[154] Again, notwithstanding the Salafists,[155] for whom not one word of Rasul Allah's Message can be eliminated, "*The Koran* is the only holy book that can cancel some steps of revelation."[156] This means that there is a least the possibility of reading Mohammed's message as compatible with the values of the secular city.

This is not the opinion of the Third Worldists, who, in spite of the global bankruptcy of communism and with a commitment worthy of a better cause, continue their irresponsible ideological warfare against liberal civilization. Carrying cultural relativism to such an extreme as to make it absurd, they argue that the values laboriously institutionalized in the West — tolerance, human and civil rights, freedom, democracy, science, etc. — lack universality. They are the values of the imperialist West and, as such, cannot be assimilated by other civilizations. Thus, according to Massimo Campanini, "parliamentary democracy can seem, and is, incapable of interpreting the governance needs of Arab and Islamic countries. If this basic and obvious truth is not understood, or is denied in the name of an a-historical concept of capitalism, considered as the only functional model of economic reality and social organization, there is the risk of a continual confrontation with the Arab-Islamic world."[157] This is rather discouraging for all those Muslim intellectuals who are trying, in sometimes desperate conditions, to prove that it is possible to reconcile Islam with modernity and, most of all, with

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153. As Kung has written: "Monotheistic religions are more inclined than others to fundamentalism. The mystical religions of India, directed toward totality, have always attempted to absorb other religions, to relativize them as preparatory stages, to incorporate them as aspects of the one and only truth (inclusivism). Compared to this, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, as prophetic religions, almost naturally tend to convert the other religions and, in certain cases, to destroy them: isolation and conquest instead of communication and communion. Their specific focus on the single God not only makes them clash often with other religions, but also repudiates them, essentially destroying the infidels through holy wars. Monotheism becomes fanaticism, especially when associated with end-of-the-world visions." See *Cristianesimo*, *op. cit.*, p. 636.

154. *Il Corano, op. cit.,* (II, 256).

155. Today, the Salafists constitute the most intransigent and extremist wing of Islamic fundamentalism: they are inspired by the great 14th century *alim,* Ibn Taimiyya, and hope to restore "past time" (*salafiyya*) by expelling from Islam everything extraneous to *The Koran* and to the *Sharia*. See Toufic Fahd, "Islam e sette islamiche," in Henry Puech, ed., *Storia delle religioni* (Bari: Laterza, 1977), Vol. II, pp. 853-860.

156. Mircea Eliade, *Storia delle credenze e delle idee religiose* (Florence: Sansoni, 1986), Vol. III, p. 82.

157. Massimo Campanini, *Islam e politica* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1999), p. 282. The reactionary nature of Campanini's theories becomes clear when one recalls that in 1999 a group of Arab intellectuals proposed to work out a "charter for Islamicists" that would highlight the problems "of civil society, women's rights, the right to different opinions, and the need for an enlightened interpretation of religion." Quoted in Gilles Kepel, *Jihad*, *op. cit.*, p. 418.

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human rights.[158] It even closes the door to the possibility of achieving in the *Dar al-Islam* that secularization which in the West has eradicated "the religious intolerance typical of its tradition";[159] and it does it on the basis of the extremely a-historical assumption that cultural traditions are completely impenetrable and they cannot evolve. Precisely the opposite has been the case; forms of collective life do have a story: they are born, they develop, they change, and they die. Today, the intellectuals and militants of "Londonistan"[160] are horrified by the "Salafist-Jihadist" ideology elaborated and administered in massive doses in the *madrasah* of Afghanistan. "Londonistan" members claim that the autonomy of civil society within the state is the only way for Muslims to escape military despotism and clerical dominion;[161] they bitterly disagree with those "Orientalists who continue to claim that Islam and democracy are incompatible . . . and who, by a twist of fate, are supported by a small but noisy minority of militant Islamicists who maintain that democratic values cannot find a place in Islam."

It is difficult to disagree with the Muslims of "Londonistan." How is it possible for the "Salafist-Jihadists" to provide a positive response to the problems of the people they are speaking for? Their program is destructive and self-destructive, based exclusively on the annihilation of individual liberty, thanks to which the West has managed to build the most creative and least imperfect city in history. Commenting on the Paris Exhibition of 1878, a young Turkish diplomat praised it with the following words: "When you raise your eyes to this fascinating exhibition of human progress, do not forget that all this is the result of freedom. It is under the protection of freedom that people and nations achieve happiness. Without freedom, there can be no security, without security there is no effort, without effort there is no prosperity, without prosperity there is no happiness."[162]

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158. The peoples of the *Dar al-Islam* can only open themselves to the culture of human rights if they carry out a systematic de-sacralization of Islamic law. See Mohammed Charfi, "Islam e diritti dell'uomo," in *Dimensioni dello sviluppo*, No. IV 1990).

159. Arnold J. Toynbee, *Storia e religione* (Milan: Rizzoli, 1984), p. 205.

160. "Londonistan" is a network of websites through which liberal Muslim intellectuals broadcast their messages and analyses worldwide.

161. See "Islamismo, pluralismo e società civile" in *Islam 21* (1999). Quoted in Gilles Kepel, *Jihad*, *op. cit.*, p. 418.

162. Quoted in Lewis, *The Idea of Freedom in Modern Islamic Political Thought*, *op. cit.*, p. 269.

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The 20th Century Ended September 11 *

Alain de Benoist

Right and Left have reacted to the Sept. 11 events according to their usual idiosyncrasies: the former demanding more security measures and increasingly speculating about the Islamic danger; the later criticizing, often advisedly, the mistakes of US policy, but failing to wonder about the nature of global terrorism, which may give the impression that it implicitly justifies the attacks or that it condemns the victims. Neither of these approaches takes full measure of the events.

1

New York has been destroyed tens of times in Hollywood disaster movies. Sept. 11 was not a movie, but it looked like one: proof that reality now imitates virtual reality or that the simulacrum precedes reality. The constant re-play on worldwide TV of the collapsing Twin Towers short-circuited a whole system of representation based on special effects. At the same time, it constituted its peak. The spectacle of terrorism took over the terrorism of the spectacle.

The New York and Washington attacks are events of huge magnitude — a "pure event" (Jean Baudrillard) — not because of the number of victims (historically, there have been more), but because of the context and the target. Since 1812, the US has never faced an attack on its own territory. The objective of the terrorists, who did not care about their own lives or the lives of their victims, was first of all symbolic: to humiliate America by showing that its territory was no longer safe, and by hitting in a spectacular way the symbols most representative of American power. They obviously reached this goal. The consequences will be long term. Sept. 11 ends the transition period, from the fall of the Berlin Wall and the beginning of the postmodern age. On Sept. 11, the US entered the 21st century.

Of course, there is no need to "feel American" to condemn the attacks. It is not just a question of "morals" or compassion for the victims. No matter what one thinks of the US or what emotions are felt at the sight of the collapsing towers — horror or secret jubilation — there are at least three good reasons to consider this terrorist act unacceptable. Political or religious fanaticism is unacceptable. A war meant not only to defeat an opponent, but also to exterminate an enemy considered evil, is unacceptable. The massacre of thousands of non-belligerents because of their nationality or for the sole purpose of terrorizing a population is unacceptable. Nobody "deserves" to die in such a manner. No cause is worth being served by all means.

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* Translated from French by Kathy Ackermann.

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2

On Sept. 11 the US faced a real human tragedy, which cannot be taken out of the political context that can explain it. Therefore, the first question to ask is not "How did it happen?' but "Why did it happen?" President Bush's answers — who, unlike Rudolph Giuliani, did not appear particularly brilliant in the days following the events — showed his character. Calling "cowards" men ready to sacrifice their lives for a cause they believe in is inappropriate. Terrorists are monstrous criminals, but certainly not cowards. (There is less "cowardliness" in voluntarily crashing the airplane one is in than in dropping bombs from the sky on a civilian population). Claiming that the US was attacked because it is the country of freedom and democracy was no less ridiculous. Does anyone seriously think that one day the terrorists said: "Americans have too much freedom, let us punish them"? The terrorists did not attack the Statue of Liberty, but the symbols of American power. As for the incredible ultimatum the American President presented to the rest of the world, to join his "crusade" or risk of its own destruction, was simply unbearable. "Those who are not with me are against me" is an absurd totalitarian slogan. Hundreds of thousands of people in the world have no sympathy for George W. Bush, yet they do not approve of Bin Laden. People as different as Pope John-Paul II, the Dalai Lama or the Spanish Prime Minister José Maria Aznar, who have condemned the attack, but have refused to participate in Bush's retaliation, certainly do not sympathize with Islamic terrorism.

More seriously, when Bush presented the war against terrorism as a "struggle between good and evil" he did not realize he was talking like Bin Laden. Where the American president calls for a crusade, the terrorist leader calls for a "jihad." One presents the Western world as Satan's incarnation and screams: "Allah Akbar," the other denounces terrorism as the Devil: "God bless America." Since presumably they are both talking about the same God, it would be funny were it not so tragic. With this kind of invocations, where talks about good and evil reinforce each other, politics falls by the wayside, and gives way to the most apolitical religious wars. More precisely, it is a return to the worst of all wars, the "just war," where, having been banished from humanity, the enemy can and must be destroyed by all means.

3

On Oct. 11, during a White House press-conference, Bush said: "I cannot understand that people can hate us . . . Like most Americans, I cannot believe it, because I know how good we are." The Americans' genuine astonishment that they can be hated (or merely criticized) reveals their extraordinary *innocence*. Many Americans have almost no knowledge of the rest of the world (less than a year ago most of them would have readily believed that Afghanistan was an island in the Pacific). They spontaneously believe that their way of life is the best or even the only possible one, and that those who think otherwise are ignorant, perverts or fools. That one could blame the US not for being the "land of freedom

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and democracy" but for having constantly supported dictatorships (Noriega, Marcos, Pinochet, Mobutu, Suharto, etc.) and for presenting itself only as a caricature of democracy, is just inconceivable. Thus, they have great difficulties relating the Sept. 11 events and their previous leaders' foreign policy.

Since the collapse of the Soviet system, the US has been the only world power — a role rather difficult to play: superpowers have never enjoyed the peoples' favor. Moreover, it has deliberately chosen to act as the world's policeman (Globocop). Therefore, it considered it its natural right to deploy its troops and wage war anywhere in the world to defend its "legitimate interests." For good or bad reasons — this is not the place to decide — it successively bombed Somalia, Nicaragua, Haiti, Salvador, the Dominican Republic, Panama, Libya, Sudan, Afghanistan, Iraq, and Yugoslavia. "Human Rights" rhetoric accompanied most of these interventions, which nevertheless have resulted in the death of many "innocent civilians."

It is estimated that, since the Gulf War, 5% of the Iraqi civilian population died, either because of "Western" bombings or because of the US-imposed blockade. Compared in scale to the American population, this figure represents 14 million people. During the May 12, 1996 showing of "60 minutes," Lesley Stahl asked former Secretary of State Madeleine Albright: "We have heard that half a million children have died in Iraq. I mean that's more children than died in Hiroshima. Is the price worth it?" she answered, yes, "We think the price is worth it."

Moreover, for decades the US has been the unconditional ally of Israel, whose presence in the Middle East is clearly perceived by the Arab-Muslim world as a neo-colonial phenomenon and as an outrageous injustice perpetrated against the Palestinian people. Today, the Israeli government receives from Washington 5 billion dollars of economic and military aid a year. It has received over 85 billion dollars since 1949. Such figures are unprecedented.

Is it really surprising that, under such conditions, some Muslims (or non-Muslims) are not insensitive to Bin Laden's arguments, and sometimes, under the influence of religious fanatics, opt for terrorism? That their perception of the US is based on or corresponds to reality only partially is irrelevant. American foreign policy has left behind enough ordeals and misery, enough bitterness, anger and resentment to be easily exploited by radical Islam. Like communism earlier, it instrumentalizes legitimate aspirations. In this sense, the New York and Washington attacks can be considered a "blowback." This is not an excuse for terrorism, but only an attempt to identify its causes. To understand does not mean to legitimate, and even less to approve. To fail to explain terrorism amounts to making it incomprehensible and only a matter of emotional attitudes and pure moral condemnations.

4

Compared to previous forms of warfare, WWII introduced at least two major changes. The first consisted in the fading of difference between civilians and soldiers, combatants and non-combatants. The introduction of air power eliminated

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the concept of the "front": a plane can go wherever it wants and can no longer be stopped at the point of contact between two armies. With high altitude bombing, *fire* replaces *impact*. Airplanes can now reach any target for military strikes. At the same time, the targets are no longer exclusively military: civilian facilities also have strategic value. Moreover, the obviously ideological nature of the last war has resulted in the disappearance of what had been preserved until the dawn of the 20th century: the idea that armed struggle was compatible with respect (if not esteem) for the enemy. Thus, it came to be accepted that it was now legitimate to defend the right cause by attacking civilian populations. German cities were subjected to "carpet bombing," and the Pearl Harbor attack, in December 1941 (2,400 casualties) resulted in a massive attack, a hundred times worse than the original one, with atomic bombs dropped on Japanese civilian populations. To which one must add the "collateral damage" caused by the inaccuracy of the strikes: in occupied France alone, 67,000 civilians died under English and American bombs.

In addition to terror bombings, there were also bacteriological warfare plans. Since 1942, England has manufactured five million daily food rations infected with Anthrax. They were supposed to be dropped over Germany in 1944 in order to contaminate the livestock first, and the German population later. The operation was cancelled because of the June 1944 D-Day landings. The Island of Gruinard, where the infected products had been tested, could only be decontaminated in 1990.

The second change (which joins the first) was the appearance of resistance movements all over occupied Europe, which have regularly been denounced as "terrorist" by ruling authorities. At the same time, foreign wars degenerate into civil wars. Developed during the Prussian and Spanish occupation against the Napoleonic armies, the partisan image of the underground fighter without uniform became popular. After 1945, more specifically during anti-colonial struggles, various armed minorities, "liberation" movements or guerillas posed as resistance organizations fighting against existing governments, which in turn branded them as "subversive" and terrorist. To various degrees, Zionist groups in Palestine, Nelson Mandela's ANC in South Africa, the FNL in Algeria, to name only a few, resorted to terrorism. In retrospect, once they succeeded and achieved international recognition, the means they used seemed justified. It came to be accepted that, in some cases, terrorism is legitimate. Of course, it has also been argued that terrorism is not justified if social and political demands can be expressed otherwise. As to what constituted "good" and "bad" terrorism, opinions differed. Gradually, the assessment of the moral or immoral character of terrorism became a matter of propaganda or merely subjective judgment.

5

The word "terrorism" remains ambiguous. People in Northern Ireland, in Corsica or in the Basque Country who resort to armed violence are denounced as "terrorists" respectively by the English, French or Spanish governments, but

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they consider themselves to be freedom fighters. One's freedom fighter is the other's terrorist. The use of the term is unstable and even reversible. The same Mujahaddin, who were regarded as "freedom fighters" when the Red Army invaded Afghanistan, suddenly become "terrorists" after they started to use the same methods against their former allies. Considered "resistance fighters" when NATO forces bombed Serbia and Kosovo, the UCK activists became "terrorists" after they attacked Macedonia, a NATO and US ally. One could go on. Things become even more complicated as terrorism, traditionally considered the weapon of the weak, has also been used by the strongest: recently, state terrorism has not been the least deadly.

This type of terrorism, however, is very different from what took place on Sept. 11. Hitherto, violent terrorist acts had clearly identified objectives: end foreign occupation, fight dictatorship, force the independence of a colony, make a revolution possible. Terrorists acted secretly, but did not hide either their political identity or their goals. Their operations took place in very specific geographical areas (or were related to a particular territory). Nothing of the kind occurred when the planes crashed on the Pentagon or the WTC. No one has claimed responsibility. The attackers did not make any demands. They do not belong to any clearly identified country, and their sphere of action extends in principle to all countries. The post-modern era marks the end of territorial logic. The image of the partisan, to which Carl Schmitt still ascribed a "telluric" character, also looses its territorial aspect. It takes on global dimensions. The perpetrators of the New York and Washington attacks should be considered global terrorists or "hyper-terrorists." Because of its "spectacular" dimension, this hyper-terrorism marks the defeat of the communication ideology and, consequently, of the preponderance of American representation in the media.

6

Osama bin Laden, the Saudi millionaire with the Christ-like face, had been an obsession of the American services long before Sept. 11. He has been accused of being the inspirer of the attacks just hours after they happened. Even though the public has not seen any formal proof of his implication, it is not unreasonable to think that the NYC terrorists had more or less been in contact with his organization. Whether he was personally involved or not is irrelevant. It is naïve to believe that global terrorism relies on one single man, organization or country. Its main characteristic is total independence.

Today, there are several hundred terrorist organizations in the world. They operate as networks. These networks have very flexible, decentralized, non-hierarchical structures, often based on family or clan. They work in such a way that their efficiency relies only very loosely on the existence of particular cells. It would be a great mistake to think that the elimination of the networks could be achieved by eliminating a leader, no matter how rich or powerful he might be.

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Such a belief only proves how little is known about the nature of global terrorism. The death or capture of one of their leaders has no major influence on their ability to harm or to survive. Bin Laden fulfills his function as a leader within a system, which does not require leaders. America has been hit by an invisible and nameless enemy. It has been attacked by networks.

The world has entered the era of networks. The new terrorist organizations are but one kind of network among others: banking and financial networks, industrial networks, information and communication networks, criminal networks, etc. The networks operate in an intermittent, fluid and informal way. It is all a question of flow (of money, symbols, images, programs), of speed, of connections. Networks link individuals or groups with common interests, independently of any territorial base. Far from weakening them, the distance separating them increases their power. In the world of networks, everything works in "zero time," at the speed of electronic signals. Events happen everywhere simultaneously, abolishing time and space. Financial markets and international mafias use the same technology.

Networks are identified by their "fluid" character, guaranteeing their opacity, and by the fact that they do not have any center or periphery, which means that each point of the network is at the same time central and peripheral. Networks create a new "fractal" type of social relations. By establishing an immediate link between individuals living far apart, they create new supra-national identities. In this sense, they participate in the irreversible decline of the nation-states. The status of the state must change when, as in the case of criminal activities, it can no longer control business, communication, as well as financial and business exchanges. The concept of national sovereignty, related to a specific territory, becomes meaningless. The transition from the modern to the post-modern age corresponded to the transition from a world of nation-states, national borders, and relatively enclosed territories to a world of continents, communities, and networks.

Networks spread like a virus. The electronic virus, transmitted by *hackers* through computer networks, the virus responsible for the most talked about diseases (AIDS, foot and mouth disease, mad cow disease), the Anthrax virus used as a bacteriological weapon, the information precipitating the chain destabilization of the global financial markets, the inflammatory speech traveling around the world through the Internet, all operate according to the same paradigm. Hyper-terrorism is a product of globalization. Like multinationals, NGOs, or drug cartels, it has no nationality. It uses the planet's "gray zones," where there are no political and legal structures, where no one controls anything any longer. Confronted with problems, terrorists do what General Motors, Nike, or Pepsi do: they go somewhere else. Thus, the Western system of free trade and free circulation turned against itself.

7

The attacks in New York and Washington have been called "acts of war." But it is a new type of war. In traditional wars, the main objective is usually to occupy,

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defend, or conquer land. This is no longer the case, since there are no fronts anymore. In traditional wars, states, or at least clearly identifiable political entities, confront each other. But no one has claimed responsibility for the Sept. 11 attacks. The parallel with the Pearl Harbor attack is deceptive: the question then was merely to identify the role played by the Japanese. Thus, it is better to compare the Sept. 11 events not to Pearl Harbor, but to the Sarajevo attack which opened an era for a new type of belligerence. The end of the Cold War did not end all conflicts (and even less "history"), but it precipitated their metamorphosis. In the war against terrorism, states do not confront *private* armed organizations, but non-governmental *political* entities — a faceless and nameless enemy. It is a global war: a "netwar," to use a term introduced by David Ronfeldt and John Arquilla as early as 1993.

Even though during the Gulf War 90% of the military means used were still traditional, in this war conventional retaliation and nuclear deterrence do not work anymore. The attacks have already shown that the anti-missiles project announced by the US, at the risk of starting another arms race, was useless. They also marked the end of the "zero casualty war," which, thanks to massive high altitude bombings, minimized the number of American casualties, and gave the impression that the enemy was at one's mercy.

During earlier wars, one looked for a balance of forces (or a balance of terror). Now, the key is asymmetry. This asymmetry between heavy structures and fluid logistics (and not dissymmetry, which only conveys a quantitative inequality) is noticeable in all fields. Asymmetry of players: on one side, states, on the other, trans-national groups. Asymmetry of objectives: terrorists know where to hit; their opponents do not know how to retaliate. Asymmetry of means: on Sept. 11, within a few minutes, battle ships, atomic bombs, F-16 and cruise missiles became obsolete in front of a few dozen of fanatics with knives and box-cutters. With minimum means, the New York and Washington attacks shook up America and caused, directly or indirectly, damages of up to 60 billion dollars. (The same asymmetry exists in the Palestinian Intifada: stones against tanks). The main asymmetry, however, is psychological: there is a huge gap between those who fear a lot of things more than death and a world in which individual life, pure immanence, is considered as something unsurpassable. While some think about retirement, others think about paradise. For terrorists, death is a reward. Faced with the death wish as the absolute weapon, the Western world is necessarily disarmed.

War against terrorism is the first post-modern and "furtive" war, the first war of globalization. It no longer has any limits, either territorial or in the choice of means. The main feature of globalization is that it cannot be subordinated to, controlled or regulated by any superior power. For the first time in history, it establishes a world without borders. In the era of globalization, there are no longer "sanctuaries," or safe countries. Since there are no more borders, the battlefield expands over the whole world. The airplanes hijacked by terrorists on Sept. 11 were American planes (American and United Airlines) on domestic

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flights. Their pilots had been trained in the US, where some of them had been living for several years. Nothing shows better the fading of borders between inside and outside than the growing confusion between the tasks of the police and those of the army. Confronted with terrorism, the police are forced more and more to resort to military means, whereas armed interventions are increasingly portrayed as "international police operations." The traditional distinction between friend and enemy does not make sense anymore, because now there is no way to know who is a friend and who is an enemy, who is "inside" and who is "outside." The one that looks like a "friend" might well be an enemy. Ultimately, in a globalized world there are no longer any foreign wars, but only civil wars

After the elimination of a lot of other traditional distinctions (between civilians and soldiers, front and rear, etc.), even the distinction between war and peace disappears. "Hot peace" replaces "cold war." It is the generalization of an exceptional situation: the exception becomes the rule, while violence (governmental or trans-national, institutional or wild) becomes the *modus vivendi* of a growing number of individuals and groups. Wars start without a declaration of war. On the other hand, once the arms are silent, peace becomes another way to pursue hostilities (sanctions against Iraq, Milosevic's trial in The Hague). It is the reversal of Clauswitz's formula: politics and peace extend war by other means. Global war tends to last forever. War is not declared and never ends.

8

One is necessarily the enemy of whoever designates one the enemy. The collapsing of the "fortress America" proves that no country is safe from hyper-terrorism. Finally, it is every country's duty to ensure the safety of its citizens. That is why one must fight global terrorism. But it has to be done with the appropriate means.

The US should have learned from its previous "retaliatory" operations — "Eagle Claw" in Iraq (1980), "Urgent Fury" in Grenada (1983), "Just Cause" in Panama (1990), "Restore Hope" in Somalia (1993), not to mention the destruction of a pharmaceutical plant in Sudan in 1998 — almost all of them ending in a pitiful way. That has not been the case. Obviously, President Bush wanted to react in a spectacular way in order to satisfy a public opinion calling for quick and brutal revenge (according to a *New York Times* survey, 60% of American supported a war "even if thousands of innocent civilians should be killed"), and the clear identification of the culprits. For its part, the military-industrial complex needed a global enemy, identifiable with the "Evil Empire," to assert its power and continue to manufacture weapons. When the enemy does not have a face, he needs to be given one, i.e., one has to be constructed. It turned out to be Bin Laden and, behind him, the Taliban. In the days following the attacks, it would have been wiser not to mention Bin Laden and to eliminate him discreetly. Putting him in the spotlight, even if only to expose him to global condemnation, made him into a hero, maybe even a martyr.

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So Bush chose the forceful solution, because public opinion demanded it and because it appeared to be the only one which could reinforce in Americans the conviction that they are the strongest, and therefore the best; that they can always impose their viewpoint, and that they are always right.

While everyone expected a longer war, the American military victory was not a surprise. Crushing with guided missiles and massive bombings a country which does not have an army, an air force, an antiaircraft defense, or important civilian and military infrastructures is not a big deal. The war has mainly provided an opportunity to test new, sophisticated weapons in real settings, and to demonstrate once again American absolute military supremacy — a supremacy that should come as no surprise, considering that with a military budget of 366 billion dollars in 2002, the US spends more than Russia, China, France and Germany combined.

But what is the result? Despite the propaganda pounded out by Washington commentators, the "fight against terrorism" is an almost complete failure. Osama bin Laden, whose capture or death seemed a little more certain every day, has vanished. Mullah Omar has disappeared. Al Qaida leaders remain untraceable. Not a single person who could be blamed with certainty of having participated in the Sept. 11 events has officially been captured or killed. The Western press described in great detail Bin Laden's "underground refuge," a fortress built in a mountain, equipped with the most sophisticated technology, and reminiscent of James Bond movies, Hitler's bunker and Ali Baba's cavern. After the storming of Tora Bora, TV has only been able to show obscure caverns and rat holes.

Nor has the war in Afghanistan reestablished "any democracy" — a word which, in this part of the world, has absolutely no meaning. It has just been a matter of one Islamic faction replacing another. The combatants for the Northern Alliance, who had massacred 50,000 people in Kabul between 1992 and 1996, immediately after regaining power looted the food warehouses and reestablished their monopoly of the drug trade. In the cities, insecurity and criminality have soared. In Kabul as well as Jalalabad the new leaders have announced that public executions will continue and that the *sharia* remains in place: once the Western TV left, women put on their *burqah* again. In the north of the country, the Hazara minority is again threatened by the Pashtun and Tadjik alliance, while the "warlords" everywhere have already resumed fighting.

Even though the number of air strikes is lower than during the war in Kosovo (4,700 all together against 13,000 in the Balkans), the number of civilian casualties is higher. Dr. Marc Herold, economics professor at the University of New Hampshire, estimates their number at 4,000. In addition, there are the injured, displaced people as well as the victims of summary executions and rapes. The air raids drove away from their homes over 1,500,000 Afghans.

During the hostilities, Donald Rumsfeld unambiguously called for the killing of Al Quida members, even if they decided to surrender or if they were prisoners. Thus, over 400 prisoners were massacred during the uprising at Fort Qala-e-Jhangi,

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and probably even more in Kunduz or during the capture of Tora Bora. Other alleged terrorists have been transferred to the American base of Guantanamo in Cuba. Locked in cages like animals — a sight, which will undoubtedly lead to new recruits for terrorism — they have been denied the status of prisoners of war, an obviously blatant violation of the Geneva Convention. Their fate remains uncertain. Special tribunals, unencumbered by normal legal practices, should try them. In the American press, some commentators have even suggested that, in order to make them talk, the use of torture would be perfectly justified.

The country's new strong man, Hamid Karzai, is one of the tribal chiefs of the Southern branch of the Pashtun ethnic groups. For the Americans, he has the advantage of having been in contact with the CIA, in particular with William Casey and George Bush, after the war against the Red Army. Thus, he was a lot "safer" than his rival Abdul Haq, this Northern Alliance chief, who Washington thought was too close to the Russians and the Iranians, and was assassinated by the Taliban under mysterious circumstances at the beginning of the war. Hamid Karzai has been educated in the US, where he was — lucky coincidence — a consultant for El Segundo, the Californian subsidiary of the oil company Unocal, when it was negotiating with the Taliban the installation of a pipeline in Afghanistan.

In December 1979, the Russians had invaded Afghanistan to defeat resistance by any means. Six years later, they packed up and left. Every time someone tried to invade it, Afghanistan turned out to be a quagmire. This time, once again, nothing has been solved. More than ever Afghanistan is at brink of civil war and endemic fighting between rival fractions. The question is: What are the risks of contagion? The worst scenario is one of political trouble in Pakistan and the rise to power of Islamic extremists in a country with nuclear power. This would be a major destabilization in the Indian subcontinent, where the Indian-Pakistani conflict has already resulted in four wars in 50 years (including the one in 1971, which ended with the creation of Bangladesh). It is probably not an accident that the war in Afghanistan coincides with a rise of tension in Kashmir and a recent deterioration of relations between India and Pakistan. A modern Islamic state, Pakistan now has 140 million inhabitants, and should have 195 million within 15 years. 61% of its population is less than 25 years old.

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But, Afghanistan is also a country whose geopolitical importance cannot be underestimated. Indeed, oil and gas pipelines intended to transport the huge oil reserves in Central Asia and the Caspian region to the Arabian Sea and the Indian Ocean have to pass through its territory. The oil reserves of the former Soviet republics of Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan are estimated at 15 billion barrels. Chinese industrial growth increases Beijing's need for gas and oil: China has been importing oil since 1993, and its consumption should soon catch up with that of US. Under these conditions, it is vital for them to control the

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reserves located between the Caspian Sea and the Persian Gulf, and to dispatch them toward the Pakistani coast, avoiding the cartel of oil-producers in the Gulf zone. A Russian oil pipeline has already been opened between Baku and the Novorossiysk harbor in October 2001. The pipelines being built since 1998 by Unocal have to go through Afghanistan, a distance of 1,200 km, to connect Dauletabad in Turkmenistan to Multan in Pakistan (estimated cost: $1.9 billion).

As soon as the Taliban took over power, Washington's policy toward the new regime appeared to be concerned primarily with Unocal's interests. The Afghan-American Zalmai Khalilzad provided the connection between the company and the Taliban — the same Khalilzad who Bush has recently appointed a special agent in Afghanistan, after he was Condoleezza Rice's adviser for Afghan affairs. Also present at the negotiations was Laila Helms, a niece by marriage of former CIA director Richard Helms and the unofficial representative of the Taliban regime in the US. In December 1997, several Taliban leaders were invited on his behalf to visit Unocal installations in Houston. They were welcomed in royal fashion.

It is difficult to ignore all this, when former leaders of the oil industry dominate the current American government. Bush started at the oil company Arbusto Energy, renamed Bush Exploration Oil in 1982 and later merged with another company under the name Harken Energy Corporation. Before he held his current position, Vice President Dick Cheney was the CEO of Halliburton, which had been officially in charge of the construction of the Afghan pipeline. (This huge multi-national company, with more than 100,000 employees in 130 countries, had sales of over $15 billion). The Under-Secretary Kathleen Cooper has worked for Exxon. Condoleeza Rice was a member of the board for Chevron (which went as far as to name one of its supertankers "SS Condoleeza Rice"). The Under-Secretary of Commerce, Donald Evans, made his career in the oil industry.

In addition, Afghanistan is the only country in the world bordering four different nuclear powers: India, Pakistan, China and Russia. It has common borders with Iran and former Soviet republics in Central Asia. The war allowed the US to achieve a strategic breakthrough. Moreover, the establishment of American bases or a Washington-controlled government in Afghanistan now allow NATO forces to definitively deny Russians, already threatened by the bases in the Baltic countries, access to the "hot seas" of the Southern hemisphere.

Considering all this, one wonders whether the objective of the war in Afghanistan was really to "fight against terrorism" and to destroy the Al Quaida network. Since Bin Laden's presence in their territory was harming their international image, in 1999 the Taliban proposed to the Americans to neutralize or eliminate him. Americans did not follow up on this proposal. After the Sept. 11 events, they still proposed to hand him over on the condition that he be tried in a neutral country — a procedure not altogether unacceptable, since it had already been followed with the alleged perpetrators of the air attack

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in Lockerby. Washington again refused. Furthermore, the former Pakistani minister for foreign affairs, Niaz Naik, has revealed that, as early as July 2001, American officials had proposed to him a military plan for overthrowing the Taliban regime and replacing it by a "moderate" regime.

The Gulf War allowed Americans to install permanent military bases in Saudi Arabia. The war against Serbia allowed them to settle permanently in Bosnia, Kosovo, and Macedonia. It is a safe bet that, after defeating the Taliban, they will install themselves not only in Central Asia and Afghanistan, but also in Georgia, Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan, in order to control the region's oil and gas, and include the former Soviet republics into their sphere of influence. This will provide them with a place of utmost geo-strategic importance between China and Russia. "Humanitarian assistance" is a good pretext to reach this objective. To preach about "the good" almost always hides a will for absolute power.

For the time being, though, it is time for Russian-American cooperation. It is one of the great ironies of history to have seen the US fight a war against Islamic terrorism in Afghanistan together with the Russians, after the US armed and even financed the same terrorism 20 years ago to weaken Russian power. Just as they had not hesitated to join Islamic fundamentalists in the struggle against the Soviet Union, the US did not hesitate to support Pakistani putschist General President Perverz Musharraf or Uzbek dictator Islam Karimow in order to defeat the Taliban. After being the main Taliban supporter against the Northern Alliance (and having sponsored Kashmir terrorism for over ten years), Musharraf has been showered with gifts ($6 billion of foreign aid in three months) and has had the economic sanctions imposed on Pakistan for testing nuclear devices lifted. Yet, the Pakistani head of the secret service, General Mahmoud Ahmed, who on Sept. 11 was in Washington meeting with members of the State Department and the CIA, also had a deposit of $100,000 made on the bank account of Mohammed Atta, one of the perpetrators of the New York attacks, through a middleman, another terrorist, the Anglo-Pakistani Ahmed Omar Sheik. President Musharraf asked him to resign on Oct. 8, the same day the US started bombing Afghanistan.

At the same time, under the pretense of fighting against terrorism or "Islamic fundamentalism," the Sept. 11 events will allow Russia to continue its colonial war in Chechnya, the bloody Algerian military junta to "eradicate" its opponents, China to accelerate its repression of the Okighurs minorities (7 million people) in the Muslim province of Xinjiang (former Eastern Turkestan, a region rich in oil deposits), and, last but not least, the Israeli government to intensify its policy of "targeted assassination" of Palestinian leaders. After Sept. 11, Ariel Sharon has compared Yasser Arafat to Bin Laden, and has undertaken, with Bush's support, to delegitimate the leader of the Palestinian authority, branded as the only real obstacle to the crushing of the Palestinian movement.

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10

No one will regret the abominable Taliban regime: these fanatics had pushed to the limit misogyny and iconoclasm typical for monotheistic religions. Yet, the shortcomings of this regime do not alter the fact that the American war in Afghanistan is clearly illegal from the point of view of international law. Art. 51 of the UN Charter allows for self-defense, but not retaliation. It allows a nation to respond to an attack with force, but not to retaliate once the attack has ended or is stopped.

American indifference to international law and the UN policies was already clear during the Gulf War and, later, during the attack on Kosovo. But it became even more obvious when the Reagan administration attacked Nicaragua, mined its harbors, and provided financial support to the Contra terrorists, who at the time were fighting the (Left-nationalist) Sandinist government. About 30,000 civilians were killed during the offensive. Nicaragua filed a complaint before the International Court. After examining the evidence, the Court condemned the US for "illegal use of force" and ordered it to leave the country and pay substantial penalties to the government. The only US response was to reject the verdict, to announce that it would no longer recognize this jurisdiction, and to increase its support to the Contras. Later, the American government vetoed a UN resolution requiring all members of the UN to abide by international law. John Negroponte, the newly appointed US ambassador to the UN, in charge of the "war against terrorism," is the same person who, as the US ambassador to Honduras, supervised the attacks against Nicaragua in the 1980s.

The war against hyper-terrorism may require profound changes of international law (or international law may clash too much with what needs to be done). Yet, the US is the only country in the world to have ignored this law in an almost official way. The US government finances the International Tribunal of The Hague, but has stated it would never allow any of its citizens to be tried by that institution. On December 7, 2001, the US Senate approved a law (American Service Members Protection Act) allowing the Administration to take measures as severe as a military invasion to prevent American citizens from being brought before the future International Penal Court (IPC). The same government bill prohibits the participation of American troupes in UN peace operations unless the US is assured that none of their soldiers will ever be brought before this tribunal. Thus, the US does not recognize the higher authority of international jurisdiction, but demands that their allies submit to it. If the most powerful country in the world does not recognize international law, no wonder other countries or forces act the same way.

11

In fact, the objective should be to limit global terrorism and not to promote its growth. Therefore, it is not enough to attack terrorists in their supposed "refuge" or to plan retaliation after the attack. Intervention has to occur down the line. Infiltration, intelligence, and control of information are the first weapons

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against terrorism, but conventional means are not suited for the task. Faced with "viral" contagion, one must oppose a strategy of communication and connection, which is also "viral." Only networks can efficiently fight networks.

It is not easy to succeed. The impenetrable structure of the networks makes them difficult to infiltrate. To control their financial resources goes against the logic of globalization, resulting in hundreds of banks willing, in fiscal paradises, to launder any amount of dirty money. Concerning intelligence gathering, it requires surveillance, which can only restrict civil liberties. When no one can tell a friend from an enemy, when terrorist groups could be anywhere, the most "rational" approach is to suspect everyone. New restrictions in freedom of expression and communication are therefore to be expected. They will be all the more easily accepted if they are presented as necessary measures to insure greater "security." While the fight against terrorism will accelerate the decline of the nation-state, because it implies considering national borders as insignificant, it will also end up reinforcing the control powers of the state apparatus and will contribute to the rise of a society of global surveillance: the global Panopticon.

After the attacks, the US passed an "Anti-Terror Act," which allows it to arrest or to detain suspected non-citizens indefinitely, deport them, imprison them in solitary confinement and search their homes without authorization. This "patriotic" law gives the FBI and the NSA unlimited power. It sidesteps all legal restrictions as far as surveillance of communication is concerned, both at home and abroad. Over 1,200 foreigners (including about 60 Israeli) have been secretly arrested this way, because of mere suspicion. Four months later, 900 of them were still incarcerated, without having ever been presented before a judge or having had the opportunity to be assisted by a lawyer.

While terrorist activities are already sanctioned by existing legislation everywhere in Europe, on Sept. 30, 2001, the European Commission adopted an anti-terrorist bill based on an extensive definition of the term "terrorism" ("takeover or destruction of state property, means of public transportation, public places or blocking access to basic needs such as electricity, endangering of people, goods, animals or the environment") which aggregates "international terrorist" acts with any violent political action, including traditional forms of street demonstrations. Such a law would allow the criminalization of all forms of social conflict not fitting the current legal framework and the criminalization of the expression of any opinion contrary to that of the ruling party.

On November 13, President Bush also signed a bill allowing for the trial of alleged terrorists by special military courts. The bill permits the sources for the accusation to remain secret, no possibility of appeal, and places "strict limits" on the right of the defense. The trials are to take place on military bases or on warships. The verdicts have to be delivered by a commission made up exclusively of officers, unanimity will no longer be required for the death penalty, and the verdict cannot be appealed. The legal proceedings will be kept secret, and the

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conversations between the defendants and their lawyers can be recorded secretly.

The best way to fight terrorism implies, in reality, to intervene in the causes, and not on the consequences. Fighting terrorism without wondering about what provokes it renders powerless. The goal should be to isolate the terrorists from the masses amidst which they recruit, and thus to dry the well of anger, resentment, revolt, humiliation and despair from which they draw. The causes of terrorism have to be eradicated by taking into account everyone's grievances, not just the interests or views of the strongest. The real remedy for terrorism is not war, but justice.

12

For the US, this means to take a more global look at the Arab-Muslim world, and, most of all, to develop more coherent policies. In the last decades, the US has distinguished between "good" and "bad" terrorists depending on whether or not they served US interests. During the Cold War, they systematically supported Islamic movements, which they saw as a shield against secular regimes suspected of being pro-Soviet (Egypt, Iraq, Syria). In Afghanistan, they supported the Mujaheddin as early as July 1979, i.e., six months before the Soviet invasion. As the Red Army invaded Afghanistan, in collaboration with Pakistan's secret services (al-Istakhbara al-'Ama), they recruited, armed and financed close to 100,000 Mujaheddin from 40 different countries. Ten years later, the opium crop at the Pakistani-Afghan border exceeded 800 tons a year. The Afghan resistance received a total of close to $6 billion of weapons.

Injured four times while fighting the Red Army, Mullah Mohammed Omar was then considered a hero in the US. As for Osama bin Laden, he was asked by his tutor, Prince Turki Al-Faycal al-Sayd, at the time in charge of the Saudi Arabian secret services (a position he only left in August, 2001) to manage financially the CIA's secret operations in Afghanistan.

Relations were particularly close between the future President Bush and Bin Laden's entourage, thanks in particular to Bin Laden's brother-in-law, the billionaire Khaled Ben Mahfouz. In the 1990s, the latter, who has a house in Houston (he bought part of this city's airport with the support of the Bush family), was at the heart of the scandal surrounding the crash of the Bank of Credit And Commerce International (BCCI) — an Anglo-Pakistani establishment used by the Reagan-Bush administration to transfer Saudi money to the Contras and to Nicaragua and to send CIA funds to Afghan Mujaheddin. BBCI collapsed when it was established that it was also laundering money for the Medellin drug cartel. Former CIA agent James Buff was the contact between the BCCI and the Bush family. One year before its bankruptcy, the bank was used to organize illegal transactions for Bush, then the acting CEO of the Harken Energy Corporation. Today, the Bin Laden family is still one of the major financial partners of the Bush family.

In September 1996, the American assistant Secretary of State in South Asia described the Taliban's capture of Kabul as a "positive step." At the same time,

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Unocal announced the signing of an agreement with the Taliban for the construction of a gas pipeline connecting Turkmenistan to Pakistan. At that time, the Taliban had a diplomatic mission in Queens (New York), led by Abould Hakim Mojahed. Their representatives were frequently the guests of the State Department, the National Security Council and the CIA. Relations between US and the Taliban began to deteriorate in the fall of 1997. These relations were not interrupted until May 2001. In July 2001, Qazi Hussein Ahmed, leader of the pro-Taliban Pakistani movement Jamiaat-I-islamy, was still received in the offices of the CIA at Langley (Virginia).

In the meantime, there had been the Gulf War. Considered by Washington as an objective ally as long as he was fighting against Iran, Saddam Hussein suddenly became the Devil when he tried to take over Kuwait, which the British had previously cut out of his country. He was criticized for having brutally repressed his Kurd minorities in the 1980s. Yet, at the same time, between 1984 and 1989, Turkey had launched a series of military campaigns against its own Kurd population, destroying more than 3,500 villages, killing tens of thousands of people, and forcing two and a half million civilians into exile. Instead of trying to prevent them from doing so, Washington helped the massacres by arming the Turkish army, a NATO ally. The war against Iraq, the only secular country in the region also led to the death of tens of thousands of people. It was extended by an embargo and continuous bombings, which are still going on today. American troops took advantage of the situation and settled permanently in Saudi Arabia, close to Mecca, provoking the fury and indignation of the most radical Muslims. Brought back to power by the Americans, the Kuwait emir thanked them by participating in the creation, in Lugano, of the Nada Management Group, i.e., Bin Laden's financial holding.

After the Taliban's victory, the CIA-trained Mujaheddin rushed to fight in all conflicts involving Muslims. "Afghans" were seen in Algeria, Kashmir, Bosnia, Chechnya, Western China, the Philippines and Indonesia. In Egypt, the same extremists assassinated President Sadat. During the conflict in the Balkans, the US supported the Bosnian Muslims, and then the Albanian-speaking terrorists of Kosovo. In Macedonia, they finally tried to disarm the UCK that they had previously armed to fight against the Serbs.

Except for the Taliban regime, the Arab state most favorable to Islamic fundamentalism has always been Saudi Arabia. Riyadh has financed numerous terrorist networks. The Bin Laden group is closely linked to the puritan Wahhabite movement to which the Saudi dynasty officially belongs. The Wahhabite clergy, which advocates a literal reading of *The Koran*, has at its disposal in Saudi Arabia 35,000 mosques and a budget of $10 billion a year, which allow the financing of a great number of schools and theological seminaries in Europe and North America. Osama bin Laden is a Saudi, as are the majority of the financial supporters of his organization. Out of the 19 identified presumed perpetrators of the Sept. 11 attacks, 11 had connections with Saudi Arabia, none with Afghanistan.

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But until now, the US has always allowed Saudi Arabia to do what it pleased, in order to secure their oil supply. The only three countries which recognized the Taliban regime, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, and Pakistan, were three faithful American allies and clients.

No fight against Islamic terrorism is conceivable as long as the American government maintains such an incoherent policy toward the Arab-Muslim world. Similarly, no decline of terrorism is conceivable unless the US adopts a less unilateral view in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Yet, there are reasons to be pessimistic. New York City mayor Rudolph Giuliani refused a $10 million check for the families of the rescue workers killed during the collapse of the WTC towers, because the donor, an Arab prince, had suggested a "readjustment" of the American policy in this conflict.

13

Islam (1.3 billion believers) is a dynamic religion, probably the only one growing nowadays. Unlike historical Christianity, but following the example of paganism (and Judaism), it does not separate the political from the sacred, the worldly from the spiritual. As a religion, it is based on a number of beliefs are no more nor less absurd or ridiculous than those of the other monotheistic religions. Its historical relationship with Europe is far more complex than the official historiography claims. (As Henri Pirenne pointed out, beginning in the 7th century, Arab-Islamic conquests led to the rise to power of Carolingian France and Germany). There is no point in falling into Irenism or demonizing fantasies on its behalf.

Islamism has a war component (which explains Nietzsche's admiration), but this is far from defining its spirit or representing its sole characteristic. From Joshua's massacres to the crusades, other monotheistic belief systems have deployed violence, while pretending to be "loving" and "peaceful" religions — justifying it with citations from the "holy books" (See Deut. 7, 23-24 and 20, 13-14; Mat. 10, 34). In Muslim theology, "jihad" designates a vocation for the good, and only by extension of the just war. Along with Christianity, during the 14th century Islam was sometimes peaceful, sometimes warlike. It was (and still is) home for many different tendencies, which always offered the most contradictory interpretations, or the most divergent readings of *The Koran*. Finally, like all monotheistic religions, in the course of history it has experienced emotional or mystical excesses, extremist or literal movements, which tried to purify the faith and bring about a "return to the sources." From the time of the Crusades, through the Napoleonic period, to the Suez crisis, most of those extremist movements formed and developed in reaction to Western conquest and domination. Whether or not inspired by Wahhabism or recruits around the missionary movement Tabligh or Muslim Brothers, Islamic terrorism is only the most recent expression of this phenomenon.

At the risk of falling into essentialism, one cannot separate cultural and religious dynamics from their political and economic context. Seen in such a context,

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radical Islam does not reject modernism (quite the opposite, it uses all its means), but wants to provide a different version than the one prevailing in the West. (René Girard is right, from this viewpoint, to talk about "mimetic rivalry on a global scale"). Above all, it also suggests that the reasons for the expansion of radical Islam are not religious, but fundamentally political and social. Muslims use a religious rhetoric, but they mainly demand political, cultural, and ethnic recognition. The Afghan conflict is less a religious than an ethnic conflict between a majority of Patshun tribes, bound by the same Wahhabite interpretation of Islam (Tariqa Muhammadiya), and minority ethnic groups gathered around the Northern Alliance: Tajiks, Uzbeks, Shiite Hazaras, etc. Far from indicating a very hypothetical "return of the religious," Islam represents, first of all, a new formulation of the old Arab nationalist and anti-imperialist dynamic. The real question is: why has social protest and opposition to the powers that be, formerly expressed by secular nationalism (Nasser, Bath) now taken the form of religion-based opposition — why has religion replaced traditional nationalism as a way to respond or sublimate a feeling of humiliation or degradation?

The most profound *raison d'être* of Islam is the dead end in which relations between Western — starting with the US — and Muslim countries find themselves. The Arab-Muslim world has a difficult relation with its past. The fact that it is heir to a civilization equal and even superior to the Europe plays a major role in its collective psyche. It measures the gap between the time when Muslim civilization was one of the most brilliant in the world and its current situation. From the end of the 18th century, it has been schooled in Western modernity and now realizes that it did not get out of it what it wanted. This feeling drives it to seek an impossible return to "pure" Muslim tradition. The political failure of Muslim regimes, all corrupt, their inability to respond to Muslim pressure in any other way than brutal repression, and the presence in those countries of popular masses mainly composed of outcasts does the rest. Islam simultaneously offers the poorest a compensation, a feeling of belonging, and a value system. That is why the religious and the social elements tend to become one.

Finally, Muslim terrorism developed at a time when, in most of the Arab-Muslim world, political Islamism has in the last years accumulated (temporarily?) failures, be it in Algeria, Turkey, Egypt, Tunisia and even Iran.

14

In an article published in 1993, and in a book three years later, Samuel Huntington developed the now well-known thesis of the "clash of civilizations." Rejecting a unilateral vision of the world, this thesis had at least the advantage of emphasizing, after Spengler and Toynbee, the durability of the great cultural entities and the distinct areas of civilization. Bringing up the possibility of a confrontation between these cultures, Huntington called for a new equilibrium adapted to a multilateral world. Less moderate commentators later used his thesis to predict, in the light of

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recent events, a head-on collision between Islam and the West.

In a global world, where every day nation-states lose a little bit more of their importance, it is possible for cultures and civilizations to gain new political weight. Supposing that such poles of belonging could become players in international relations (which is not obvious), a "clash" between some of those cultures is also possible. Nevertheless, it is one thing to envision this possibility; it is another to welcome it and to do everything to hasten it. Generally, the responsible attitude consists in avoiding "clashes," rather than looking for them.

As Edward W. Said pointed out: "When we talk about Islam, we eliminate more or less automatically space and time." When one adopts Huntington's reasoning, the biggest risk is indeed to fall into a-historicism, and especially into a false unitary representation of these cultures. Actually, Huntington tends to erase all differences between Europe and the US, and to represent Islam as monolithic — a modern equivalent of the Ottoman armies marching toward Vienna. This is by no means an adequate representation of reality. Politically as well as geopolitically, "Islam" does not exist anymore than the "West." Neither is homogeneous, or an array of necessarily converging forces.

Beyond their ideological common dynamic, all Islamic movements have strong local and national characteristics. The Muslim world includes tens of societies and countries with completely different problems and experiences. Divided between Sunnites and Shiites, split into four different traditional schools (Hanefite, Malekite, Chafeite, Hanbaliste), it constitutes a universe more divided than ever, where movements and tendencies, sects and tribes, soldiers and mullahs confront each other. Created at the end of the 18th century by Mohammed ibn Abd al-Wahhab, the official and mandatory religion of Saudi Arabia, Wahhabism, marginalized Sunni Orthodox Islam in Pakistan, and was rejected since its birth by the great majority of the Muslim authorities, starting with the Ottoman sultan-caliph. Conversely, Sufism has been frequently accused of pantheism. (In Kashmir, the practice of Sufist-inspired Islam is moreover one of the most tolerant in the Islamic world). Syria is lead by the Alaouits, who the Sunnites consider as polytheist renegades. One could go on.

One should also recall that radical Islam's fiercest enemies — and most of its victims — are in Muslim countries. In Algeria, Egypt or Tunisia, Islamic terrorists first attack Muslim governments, Islamic institutions and authorities. The Tajik commander Ahmed Massoud, the Taliban's number one enemy, was a pious Muslim, who imposed the Islamic *sharia* in Kabul in 1994 — and so were other leaders of the Northern Alliance (whose exact name is "National Unified Islamic Front"). The Islamic Republic of Iran has always condemned the Taliban, while supporting the Shiite militia of Hesbe-Warhdat and different factions of the Northern Alliance. All of this shows how ridiculous it is to confuse Islam with Islamic terrorism. The Islamic question concerns first of all the Muslim world, and it is not the expression of a conflict between civilizations.

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To demonize all the Muslims in the world would be to fall into Bin Laden's trap and do exactly what the terrorists want. Pushing Western countries to indiscriminately declare themselves hostile to Islam would lead to the rise of thousands of new Bin Ladens. Just as Bush claims that he is speaking "in the name of civilization," Bin Laden pretends to speak "in the name of Islam." To take him at his word means to subscribe to the bipolar, simplistic idea he dreams of imposing. On the contrary, fighting against Bin Laden and his emulators requires demonstrating the wrongness of his claim. Those who support the thesis of the "clash of civilizations" are the best allies of Islamic extremism: whoever supports the idea "Islam vs. the West" uses Bin Laden's language. Those who talk about crusades do worse than stir up wild dreams: they are in the wrong time-period and they play the enemy' s game.

But the demonizing of Islam has already begun. In Europe, clever influential agents, passing themselves as Islamic "experts," work on using the legitimate resentment created by social pathologies born out of massive and uncontrolled immigration, to intensify hatred and delegitimate the demands of Arab masses in different parts of the world. At the same time, pathetic speeches one thought were long forgotten resurface, with Berlusconi or others, confusing the expression of a preference with the affirmation of superiority. These speeches about the "natural superiority of the Western world," together with calls to recolonize the world, create a deplorable climate promoting collective hysteria. The fear of contamination (e.g., by letters containing Anthrax) feeds the (media-) contamination. An environment of fear is as bad an adviser as fear. Unfortunately, those views are only beginning to be expressed. The specter of Islamic terrorism will soon be used by those who dream of taking revenge, or those who think it is in their best interest to start a "clash of civilizations." Anti-Islamicism may lead to the same mistakes prevalent when "the free world" had to be protected from communism. We are moving toward a new McCarthyism, based on the same delirious interpretations.

15

It would be a major mistake to think that Western countries are safe from all "fundamentalism." In the same way Bin Laden wants to convert or make all non-Muslims disappear from the planet, some Westerners dream of eradicating all social systems, all political and cultural entities, which do not conform to theirs. The concept that global free exchange is the only possible future for all the world cultures, and therefore desirable, is no less "fundamentalist" than the idea that the *sharia* should be instituted everywhere.

The truth is that the Western world always wants to dominate the world by imposing its ideas, techniques, products and behaviors. It invariably presents itself as "universal," therefore intrinsically good for everyone, with the inevitable consequence of making all other lifestyles and value systems appear "archaic" or inferior. In the past, similar attempts were made in the names of

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"real faith," "civilization," "progress," and "development." Today, liberal globalization spreads a philosophy of life that privileges mundane pleasures, the logic of profit and the rules of money. Its outcome will be the transformation of the world into amusement parks and entertainment supermarkets; its slogan: living is consuming. Hannah Arendt was right when she said that a totalitarian regime needs to invent its own "metaphysical enemy." The concept "Western world vs. what is not Western (or turns out to be impossible to Westernize)" is a simple reformulation of the Cold War rhetoric. To talk about enemies for cultures or peoples already means engaging in the logic of neo-colonial crusades. The abusive use of the concept of "clash of civilizations" conceals plans for Western hegemony.

The rise of convulsive indentitarianism and terrorist violence are not typical of a specific culture, but the result of the dissolution (or threat of dissolution) of all cultures. The best way to destroy hyper-terrorism would be to arrange things so that globalization no longer appears for what it is now, i.e., the unilateral imposition of a particular way of life, a not-indigenous and unique model of "civilization" or "development," which contradicts cultural identities in the rest of the world. Jacques Chirac, usually not that well-inspired, was not wrong when on October 15, 2001, he stated in front of UNESCO that the Western world should stop imposing its "mainly materialistic" culture on the whole world, which consequently perceives it "as being aggressive."

One power cannot pretend to manage the planet by itself. For a long time, the West has not been a notion of civilization, but rather a mere economic indicator. It is now up to the Europeans who, after the Sept. 11 events, have once more proven their total lack of independent political will, not only to avoid being dragged into wars in which they have no control, but also to make clear that the "Western" model of civilization is not necessarily theirs, and, in any case, does not exclude others. It is up to them to develop a new multi-polarization of international relations, and not to let themselves be confined in the alternative "Jihad or McWorld," i.e., to reject the Jihad, but not to become a tool of the McWorld.

Today, there are deplorable views, according to which those who oppose the Western model can only be reactionary souls or dangerous fools for whom the fanatic Bin Laden, coming on the scene in time to demonstrate it, is in some way the archetype. They use Islamic terrorism as a convenient repellent, whose goal it is to relegitimate a system that generates inequality, frustration, and desperation. Today, the main enemy remains more than ever the global outburst of the logic of capital and the total commodification of social relations.

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*The Spirit of Terrorism**

Jean Baudrillard

One has seen global events, from Diana's death to the Soccer World Championship, and violent and real events, from wars to genocides; but never before a symbolic event of global stature, i.e., one that does not merely circulate globally, but jeopardizes globalization. All through the stagnant 1990s, "events went on strike" (in the words of the Argentine writer Macedonio Fernandez). Well, the strike is over. Events have ended the strike. With the attacks on Washington and the WTC, the absolute event, the "mother" of all events — the pure event that embodies within itself all other events which never took place, has arrived.

The whole game of history and power has been turned upside down, as have the conditions of analysis. One must take time to reflect. As long as events were standing still, one had to anticipate and outrun them. But when events accelerate so much, one has to slow down — without becoming engulfed in a jumble of words and in the clouds of war, and without losing sight of the unforgettable flash of images. All speeches and commentaries betray a massive reaction to the event and to its mesmerizing effect. The moral condemnation, the holy union against terrorism, indicate the prodigious elation at seeing this global superpower destroyed — even better, to see it self-destruct, commit suicide in a flourish. This is because, through its unbearable power, it has instigated all this violence throughout the world, and therefore (unknowingly) the terrorist imagination in all of us.

Dreaming about this event (as everyone has, because no one can avoid fantasizing about the destruction of any power that has become so hegemonic) is unacceptable to Western moral consciousness, but it is nevertheless a fact that can be gauged by the pathetic violence of all the speeches that want to erase it. Basically, they did it, but we wanted it. If this is not taken into account, the event loses all symbolic dimensions, becomes a pure accident, a purely arbitrary act, the murderous phantasmagoria of a few fanatics, who can just be eliminated. But that it is not so. This explains all the delirious counter-phobic exorcism of evil: it is here and everywhere, like an obscure object of desire. Without this profound complicity, the event would not have had the impact it had, and in their symbolic strategy the terrorists undoubtedly knew they could count on this inadmissible complicity. This

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goes far beyond the hatred of the underprivileged and the exploited toward the dominant global power, of those who fell on the wrong side of the world order. This malicious desire is at the heart of all those who share the benefits. Fortunately, the allergy against all definitive order, against all definitive power, is universal, and the two WTC towers embodied this definitive order precisely because they were twins.

There is no need for a death-wish or for destruction, nor even for a depraved effect. It is very logical and inexorable that the exercise of power exacerbates the will to destroy it, and that it is an accomplice in its own destruction. When the two towers collapsed, it was as if they countered the suicide of the suicide-planes with their own suicide. It has been said: "Even God cannot declare war against himself." But yes, he can. In the position of God (of all divine powers and of absolute moral legitimacy), the West becomes suicidal and declares war on itself.

Countless disaster movies convey this fantasy, which they obviously conjure with images, enveloping everything in special effects. But, as with pornography, their universal attraction is that they are never too far from being acted out — the will to deny any system becomes stronger the closer the system comes to perfection or to total power. Maybe the terrorists (as well as the experts!) did not expect the collapse of the twin towers, which, much more than the Pentagon, resulted in the strongest symbolic shock. The symbolic collapse of a whole system happened thanks to an unpredictable complicity. It is as if, by collapsing on their own, by committing suicide, the towers participated in finalizing the event.

In a sense, because of its internal fragility, the whole system collaborates with the initial action. The more the system is globally concentrated, constituting but one network, the more vulnerable it becomes at one particular place (a single Philippine hacker had already succeeded, from the depth of his laptop, in launching the virus "I love you," which traveled around the world, devastating complete networks). Here are 18 kamikazes who, thanks to the absolute weapon of death, compounded by technological efficiency, started a catastrophic global process.

When the situation is so monopolized by the global power, when there is this formidable concentration of all functions by the machinery of technocracy and political correctness, what other way is there but a terrorist transformation of the situation? The system creates the objective conditions for that brutal retaliation. Holding all the cards, it forces the Other to change the rules of the game. The new rules are ferocious, because the stakes are so high. To a system whose surplus of power does not allow any challenges, terrorists respond with a definitive act also impossible to duplicate. Terrorism is an act that restores an irreducible particularity in the middle of a generalized exchange system. All particularities (species, individuals, cultures) which today challenge the establishment of global circulation directed by one single power take their revenge with their death through this terrorist transformation of the situation.

Terror against terror — there is no longer any ideology behind all this. It is now well beyond ideology and politics. No ideology, no cause, not even that of

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Islam, can justify the energy feeding this terror. Its goal is no longer to transform the world; rather, as with all, it seeks to radicalize the world through sacrifice, while the system wants to achieve its goal through force.

Like a virus, terrorism is everywhere. There is a global spread of terrorism, which is like the shadow projected by every system of domination, ready to be reactivated like a double agent everywhere. There is no longer a demarcation line to define it neatly. It is at the center of the culture it fights against, and the visible fracture (and the hatred) that pits the exploited and the underdeveloped against the Western world secretly feeds into the fracture within the dominant system. The latter can face all visible antagonisms. But the system is helpless against terrorism, which is structured like a virus — as though any system of domination fosters its own anti-system, its own disintegration — against this almost automatic reversal of its own power. Terrorism is the shock wave of this silent reversal.

So the conflict is neither a clash of civilizations nor of religions. It goes far beyond Islam and America, over which the conflict is focused in order to give the illusion of a visible confrontation and of a solution through force. It is really a fundamental antagonism, but one which designates, through the specter of America (which might be the epicenter, but not the only embodiment of globalization) and the specter of Islam (which is also not the embodiment of terrorism), triumphant globalization struggling against itself. In this sense, one can actually talk about a world war, not the third, but the fourth, and the only one really global, because what is at stake is globalization itself. The first two world wars were traditional. The first one put an end to European supremacy and colonialism; the second ended Nazism; and the third, which really took place in the form of a Cold War and *détente*, ended communism. Gradually, each moved the world closer to a univocal world order. Today, through all its current convulsions, the latter is virtually achieved, and faces antagonistic forces everywhere. It is a fractal war of all the different cells, of all particularities, which revolt in the form of antibodies. It is a confrontation so elusive that, from time to time, one has to save the idea of war with spectacular set-ups, like the one in the Gulf, or, today, the one in Afghanistan. But the fourth world war is elsewhere. It haunts every global order, all hegemonic domination. If Islam dominated the world, terrorism would rise up against Islam, since it is the world which resists globalization.

Terrorism is immoral. The WTC event, this symbolic provocation, is immoral, and it is an answer to a globalization that is immoral. So, if one wants to understand anything, one must go beyond good and evil and become immoral. For once, there is an event that not only defies morality, but also any kind of interpretation. So how should evil be understood? The crucial point is precisely this: as far as the relation between good and evil is concerned, it is in complete opposition to Western philosophy and the Enlightenment. People naively believe that the progress of good, its rise to power in all fields (scientific, technical, democratic, human rights) corresponds to the defeat of evil. Nobody seems to understand that good and evil

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increase their power simultaneously, following the same curve. One's triumph does not lead to the other's demise; quite the contrary. Metaphysically, evil is considered an accidental blunder, but this axiom, from which all Manichean forms of the struggle of good against evil derive, is an illusion. Good does not diminish evil. It is more the opposite: neither can be reduced, and their relation is inextricable. Ultimately, good could only defeat evil by renouncing to be good, because, by globally monopolizing power, it would result in a reaction of proportional violence.

In a traditional universe, there was still a balance between good and evil, according to a dialectical relation, which maintained at all costs the tension and balance of the moral universe — a little like the face-off the two powers maintained during the Cold War, assuring a balance of terror. So there is no supremacy of one over the other. This balance is broken when there is a complete extrapolation of the good (hegemony of the positive over all forms of negativity, exclusion of death and of any other adverse power — the triumph of the values of good all the way). From there, the balance is broken, and it is as if evil would recover an invisible autonomy and develop exponentially.

To some extent, that is what happened in politics with the disappearance of communism and the global triumph of liberal power: that is when a ghostly enemy appeared, intruding on the entire planet, infiltrating everywhere like a virus, reappearing in all the cracks of power: Islam. But Islam is only the moving front of the crystallization of this antagonism, which is everywhere and in everyone. So, it is terror against terror. But it is an asymmetrical terror. And it is this asymmetry that leaves the global superpower completely disarmed. Confronting itself, it can only sink into its own logic of power relations, unable to play on the field of symbolic provocation and death, having no idea what it is, because it has eliminated it from its own culture.

So far, this integrating power has succeeded in absorbing all crises, all negativity, thus creating a fundamentally desperate situation (not only for the damned of the earth, but also for the well-off in their radical comfort). The fundamental event is that terrorists no longer commit suicide in vain, but put their lives in danger in an antagonistic and efficient manner, following a strategic intuition, which is nothing but the immense fragility of the opponent, of a system that is almost perfect, and therefore vulnerable to the slightest spark. They succeeded in turning their own death into an absolute weapon against a system predicated on the exclusion of death, whose ideal is "zero-death." Every "zero-death" system is a zero-sum system, and all means of dissuasion and destruction are powerless against an enemy who has already turned his own death into a counter-offensive weapon. So, everything is about death, not only through its brutal occurrence seen live and in real time, but through an even more real eruption of death, i.e., symbolic and sacrificial death, i.e., the absolute event without possibility of appeal. Such is the spirit of terrorism.

Never attack the system in terms of a power struggle. This is the (revolutionary) imaginary that the system imposes, which can only survive by constantly

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bringing those who attack it to fight on the field of a reality that is always its own. Instead, place the struggle in the symbolic sphere, where the rule is provocation, reversal, and escalation, so that one death can only be answered by an equal or superior death. Defy the system with a gift it cannot counter, except with its own death or its own collapse. The terrorist hypothesis is that the system commits suicide, responding to multiple death and suicide provocations, because neither the system nor power can evade the symbolic obligation, and the only chance for their disaster relies on this trap: In the vertiginous cycle of the impossible exchange of death. The death of the terrorist is an infinitesimal point, but one which induces an aspiration, an emptiness, and a gigantic convection. The whole system of reality and power becomes concentrated, is paralyzed, shrinks, and collapses around this tiny point, through its own super-efficiency.

The tactic of the terrorist model is to provoke a surplus of reality and to make the whole system collapse under it. The irony of the situation is that the violence mobilized by power turns against it, for terrorist acts are simultaneously an exorbitant mirror of its own violence and the model for a symbolic violence that it cannot use, the only violence it cannot deploy, i.e., the violence of its own death.

That is why all visible power can do nothing against the tiny, but symbolic death of a few individuals. It must be realized that a new terrorism is born — a new form of action that plays the game and appropriates the rules for itself, so it can better upset them. Not only do these people not fight with the same weapons, because they use their own deaths, to which there is no possible answer ("they are cowards"), but they also appropriate all the weapons of the dominant power. Money and stock speculations, computer and aeronautical technologies, the spectacular dimension and media networks — they have completely adopted modernity and globalization without changing their course, which is to destroy it.

As their most cunning trick, the terrorists even used the banality of American everyday life as a mask and a double play: sleeping in suburbs, reading and studying in a family environment, before going off one day like a time bomb. The perfect mastery of this secrecy is almost as much a terrorist act as the spectacular act of Sept. 11. Since it turns every individual into a suspect, does it not also turn all innocent persons into potential terrorists? If those individuals can go unnoticed, every one becomes an unnoticed criminal (every airplane becomes similarly suspect), and ultimately it may be true. Maybe it really corresponds to an unconscious form of potential criminality, masked and carefully repressed, yet always prone if not to resurface, at least to secretly vibrate at the sight of evil. So the event branches out into the smallest details — the source of a mental and even more subtle terrorism.

The fundamental difference is that, with the system's weapons, the terrorists have at their disposal a lethal weapon: their own death. If they limited themselves to fighting the system with its own weapons, they would be immediately eliminated. If the system were to counter them with its own death, they would just as quickly disappear in a pointless sacrifice — as terrorism has almost always done

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(the Palestinian suicide-attacks), which is why they were bound to fail. Everything changes as soon as they combine all available modern means with this highly symbolic weapon. That compounds *ad infinitum* the destructive potential. It is this multiplication of elements (which, seem irreconcilable) that gives them such superiority. But, the "zero-death" strategy, that of a "proper" technological war, misses precisely this transfiguration of "real" into symbolic power. The fabulous success of such an attack poses a problem, and in order to understand anything it is necessary to step back from the Western perspective to see what is going on in their organization and in their heads.

Such efficiency would require a maximum amount of calculation, i.e., a rationality difficult to imagine others have. And even in this case, as in any other rational organization or secret service, there would have always been leaks and blunders. So the secret of such a success lies elsewhere. The difference is that for them it is not a matter of an employment contract, but of a pact, a sacrificial obligation. Such an obligation is safe from defection or corruption. The miracle is to have adjusted to the global network, to the technical protocol, without losing any of the complicity between life and death. Unlike a contract, a pact does not bind individuals — even their "suicide" is not an individual heroism, but a collective sacrificial act sealed by an ideal requirement. And it is the combination of the two systems, an operational structure and a symbolic pact, which made possible an act of such dimensions.

A symbolic calculation, as used in a poker game or a potlatch: minimal stakes, maximum results, remains a mystery. This is exactly what the terrorists achieved with the Manhattan attack, which would pretty well explain chaos theory: an initial shock precipitating incalculable consequences, while the huge American deployment (Desert Storm) had only trivial results — the hurricane ending, so to say, with the fluttering of butterfly wings. Suicidal terrorism used to be a poor man's terrorism; this one is a rich man's terrorism. And this is what is frightening: they became rich (they have all the means), but they do not stop wishing for the West's demise. Indeed, according to the Western value system, they are cheating: it is not fair to jeopardize one's own life. But they do not care, and the new rules of the game are not up to the West anymore.

Everything is fair game to discredit the terrorists' actions, as it is to call them "suicidal" and "martyrs," and to add immediately that a martyr does not prove anything, that he has nothing to do with the truth, even that he is (quoting Nietzsche) truth's number one enemy. Indeed, their death does not prove anything, but there is nothing to prove in a system where truth is elusive. But, this highly moral argument reverses itself. If the voluntary martyrdom of kamikazes does not prove anything, then the involuntary martyrdom of the victims of the attack does not prove anything either, and there is something improper and obscene in making it a moral argument (this does not prejudge in any way their suffering and death).

Another argument made in bad faith: these terrorists trade their death for a place in paradise. Their action is not free; therefore it is not authentic. It would

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only be free if they did not believe in God, if death would be hopeless (although the Christian martyrs did not expect anything more than this sublime equivalence). So, once again, they do not fight on a level field, since they are entitled to a salvation Westerners can no longer hope for. In fact, all this — the cause, the proof, the truth, the reward, the end, and the means — are all typical Western forms of calculation. Even death is evaluated in terms of interest rates, of good or bad returns for one's money. It is an economic calculation — the calculation of the poor who do not even have the courage to put a price on it. What can happen — except war, which is only a conventional protective screen? There is talk of bio-terrorism, bacteriological warfare, or nuclear terrorism. None of this is on the level of symbolic provocation, rather it is on the level of annihilation without words, without glory, without risk — on the level of the final solution.

It is inconsistent to see in the terrorists' acts a purely destructive logic. It seems that their own death is part of their acts (that is precisely what makes it symbolic) and not at all of the impersonal elimination of the Other. Everything is in the provocation and in the duel, i.e., in a personal relation with the opposite power. It has humiliated, so it has to be humiliated. It cannot be merely exterminated: it has to lose face. This cannot be accomplished by pure force or by the elimination of the Other. The latter has to be targeted and wounded in full enmity. In addition to the pact that binds the terrorists, there is something of a mutual pact with the opponent. It is exactly the opposite of the cowardliness they are blamed for, and it is exactly the opposite of what, e.g., the Americans did in the Gulf War (and are now doing in Afghanistan): invisible targets, operational liquidations. The pregnancy of these images and their fascination must be saved, because, like it or not, they are original impressions. The New York events have radicalized the relation between image and reality, at the same time that they have radicalized the global situation. Since there were only an uninterrupted flow of trivial images and bogus events, the New York terrorist attack has revived both the image and the event.

Among the system's weapons, the terrorists also exploited the immediacy of the images — their instant broadcasting world-wide. They appropriated them like they did stock speculations, electronic information, or air traffic. The function of images is highly ambiguous. While these images glorify the event, they also take it hostage. They can compound *ad infinitum*, and simultaneously act as a diversion and a neutralization (as was already the case with the 1968 events). What one always forgets when talking about the "danger" of the media is that the image consumes the event, in the sense that it absorbs it and prepares it for consumption. Indeed, it gives the event new vigor, but as an image-event.

What happens then to the real event, when image, fiction, and virtual reality intrude everywhere on reality? In this case, one thought (maybe with a certain relief) that there was a resurgence of the real — of the violence of the real — in a supposedly virtual universe. "Forget about the virtual — this is real!" In the same way, one could see a revival of history, beyond its projected end. But does reality

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really go beyond fiction? If this seems to be the case, it is because reality absorbed the energy of fiction, and became fiction. One could almost say that reality is as jealous of fiction as the real is jealous of the image. . . . It is a kind of duel between them: which one will be the most unimaginable?

The collapse of the WTC is unimaginable, but that is not enough to make it a real event. An increase of violence is not enough to open up to reality. For reality is a principle, and it is this principle that is lost. The real and the fiction are inextricable, and the fascination of the attack is in the first place the fascination for the image (the consequences, at the same time elating and disastrous, are largely imaginary). So, in this case, the real adds a bonus of terror to the image, like an additional thrill. Not only is it terrifying, it is also real. Rather than having first the violence of the real and the thrill of the image following it, the image is there first, and the thrill of the real comes later. It is something like an additional fiction — a fiction going beyond fiction. Ballard (after Borges) used to talk about reinventing the real as the ultimate and most frightening fiction.

Thus, this terrorist violence does not amount to reality backfiring, any more than to history backfiring. This terrorist violence is not "real." In a way, it is even worse: it is symbolic. In itself, violence can be perfectly trivial and harmless. Only symbolic violence generates particularity. In this particular event, this Manhattan-disaster movie, the two elements of 20th century mass fascination are intimately combined: the white magic of movies and the black magic of terrorism. The white light of the image and the black light of terrorism.

Afterwards, one tries to give it some meaning, some interpretation. But there is none, and the only thing original and implacable is the show's extremism and brutality. The spectacle of terrorism introduces the terrorism of the spectacle. And the political order is powerless against this immoral fascination (even if it precipitates a universal moral reaction). It is a theater of cruelty, the only one remaining — extraordinary, because it combines the most spectacular with the most provocative. It is simultaneously a terrific micro-model of a core of real violence with the most repercussions — the purest form of the spectacular — and a sacrificial model that imposes on the historical and political order the purest symbolic form of provocation. One could forgive the terrorists any killing, if it had a meaning, if it could be interpreted as historical violence — this is the moral axiom of good violence. One could forgive them any violence, were it not taken over by the media ("Terrorism is nothing without the media"). But all this is an illusion. There is no good use of the media. The media are part of the event, they are part of the terror, and they go either way.

The repressive act follows the same unpredictable spiral as the terrorist act; nobody knows where it will stop, and which reversal of the situation will follow. There is no possible distinction, as far as images and information are concerned, between the spectacular and the symbolic. There is no possible distinction between "crime" and repression. This uncontrollable outburst of reversibility is

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terrorism's true victory. It is a victory visible in the event's underground ramifications and infiltrations — not only in the direct, economic, political, financial recession of the whole system, and in the resulting moral and psychological recession, but also in the recession involving the value system, the whole ideology of freedom, the freedom of movement, etc., which was the pride of the Western world, and which it boasted to rule over the rest of the world. So much so that the concept of freedom, a new and recent concept, is already being erased from customs and consciousness, and that liberal globalization is taking the exact opposite form: that of totalitarian globalization, absolute control, and the terror of safety. Deregulation ends up with as many constraints as those of a fundamentalist society. It means decreases in production, consumption, speculation and economic growth (but certainly not corruption). It is as if the global system were making a strategic withdrawal, an agonizing reconsideration of its values — in a seemingly defensive reaction to terrorism, but responding in fact to secret injunctions. It is a forced regulation resulting from absolute chaos, one it imposes on itself, internalizing in some way its own defeat.

Another aspect of the terrorists' victory is that all other forms of violence and destabilization of the order play in its favor: computer terrorism, biological terrorism, anthrax, and rumor terrorism. Bin Laden is blamed for everything. He could even claim responsibility for natural disasters. All forms of disorganization and perverse circulation benefit him. Even the structure of generalized global exchange plays in the favor of the impossible exchange. It is like an automatic writing of terrorism, powered and fed by the involuntary terrorism of information, with all the resulting panic. If, in this anthrax story, intoxication occurs through instant crystallization; like a chemical solution coming in contact with a molecule, the system has reached a critical mass, which makes it vulnerable to any aggression.

There is no solution to this extreme state of affairs — especially not war, which can only recycle a previous situation, with the same flood of military forces, ghostly information, pointless bludgeoning, deceitful and pathetic speeches, technological deployment and intoxication. In short, it is like the Gulf War: a non-event, which did not really take place. Its only *raison d'être* is to substitute a real, formidable, unique, and unpredictable event with a recurrent pseudo-event. The terrorist attack corresponded to an event preceeding all models of interpretation, while the stupidly military and technological war corresponds to a superimposition of the model over the event, i.e., an artificial stake, and to a dismissal: the war is a continuation of the lack of politics by other means.

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*Terrorism of the Spirit**

Alain Minc

In the name of the principle of equivalence that currently seems to stimulate his thought, Jean Baudrillard actually practices the terrorism of the spirit precisely when he thinks he is going to capture the spirit of terrorism. It appears to be a great spirit, but it is less an excuse than an aggravating circumstance. A different analysis could have been expected from the master of variations about the duality between the real and the virtual, image and substance, media and reality. In his eyes, the collapse of the Twin Towers could have signaled the final triumph of the virtual, the moment when, in a deafening manner, it captures the real; i.e., the demonstration of the accuracy of the most classical of Baudrillard's thoughts.

Instead of playing along those lines, no matter how familiar, he has decided instead to take on the role, so traditional in France, of the great intellectual prophesizing the event, vouching for his legitimacy and, of course, guaranteeing the revolution on the march. After Michel Foucault, the defender of Iranian Khomeinism in 1979 and therefore in theory supporting it, here is Baudrillard, the philosopher of the "terrorist model" (*sic*). Honor where honor is due: the culprits are — what a surprise — globalization and its corollary: the American superpower. "Liberal globalization is taking the exact opposite form: that of totalitarian globalization, absolute control, and the terror of safety. Deregulation ends up with as many constraints as those of a fundamentalist society."

One type of terror can only be answered by another, one type of fundamentalism by yet another: QED . . . Is it not the system that "creates the objective conditions for that brutal retaliation."? "Holding all the cards, it forces the Other to change the rules of the game." Who is this Other, so dignified that he deserves a capital O? It is "the world itself which resists globalization." The shell-game trick becomes more and more daring: so terrorism is the embodiment of the "world." Indeed, it is "immoral" — what a concession from Baudrillard — but it is only an answer to a "globalization, which is immoral." That is the principle of equivalence working at top speed: the world responds to globalization, terror to terror, one evil to another. As Baudrillard feels that the objection of the distinction between good and evil is coming, he disposes of it ahead of time: "For once, there is an event that not only defies morality, but also any kind of interpretation, so how should evil be understood? The crucial point is precisely this: as far as the

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relation between good and evil is concerned, it is in complete opposition to Western philosophy and the Enlightenment." Our wicked magician is at the peak of his talent: where you think you see good, you actually see its double, QED again.

Focusing on his desire to conceal things, thanks to yet another magic trick Baudrillard makes the debate about Islam disappear: "Islam is only the moving front of the crystallization of this antagonism." No promise of paradise, no *fatwa*, no excommunication, but crystallization — using the same word Stendhal used in talking about love: it is a rather cursory synthesis of Islam.

Finally, the only thing missing to strengthen the comment is a morbid fascination with the terrorists. Baudrillard succumbs to this fascination with more than ambiguous words: "a sacrificial obligation . . . without loosing any of the complicity between life and death. . . . Everything is fair game to discredit their actions. . . . Indeed, their death does not prove anything, but there is nothing to prove in a system where truth is elusive." Ultimate arrow of indifference: "the consequences, at the same time elating ["elating"! That is what it says] and disastrous, are largely imaginary." Should this apology, pretending to be an explanation, be given the slightest importance? Unfortunately, yes. It comes from a majestic intellectual, one of those thinkers whose name the media only utters with respect, someone welcome to support any fight, the best and the worse. It conveys the traditional failure of the French intelligentsia to admit that there is a hierarchy of values and that referring to morals is not indecent.

"Anti-humanism" has been spreading for decades, but it was supposed to have been overthrown along with communism. Big mistake: it is still here, and Braudrillard practices it with compunction: nothing is worth anything; human rights are an illusion; terrorist violence is a corollary to institutional totalitarianism. This fires up anti-American impulses, Third-World reflexes, and left-wing reactions, which run through French public opinion. Baudrillard's is not an isolated viewpoint: he is merely unveiling, thanks to his conceptual apparatus, what so many realize through unsaid things and ulterior motives. One exceptional circumstance is enough to see the old demons of intellectual totalitarianism reemerge.

Why is the other side so quiet? Why do so few thinkers and philosophers elaborate some obvious truths? The first one: the absolute superiority of democracy: a claim that has nothing to do with Berlusconi-style inanities about the superiority of Western values. Some Muslim countries have indeed tried to practice democracy and the electoral game, demonstrating a collective courage much more impressive than, e.g., what it takes to cast a vote in Luxembourg or Brussels. Democracy, this supreme value, is not something belonging exclusively to the Western world. Second truth, more iconoclastic: America rhymes with democracy. How does Baudrillard explain the patriotic reflex, after Sept. 11, of all minorities, including Muslim, from one end of America to the other? Will he take the old detour of Marxist alienation to get out of it? Third truth, probably too childish: morals are not an empty set, as mathematicians say, and democratic regimes allow them to express them-

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selves better than any other system. Fourth truth, even more commonplace: how can democratic countries be refused the right to defend themselves? Should the English have not bombed Dresden out of respect for civilians, or the Americans Hiroshima, thus allowing WWII to go on? Fifth and ultimate truth: it is within the Western system, within the inseparable couple democracy-market that the forces of opposition, the antidotes for the excesses of liberalism develop best. All alternative regimes have failed: from this viewpoint, Islamic fundamentalism is no more attractive than fascism or communism.

This moderate *vade mecum* is, of course, less exciting to manipulate for a "great consciousness" than globalizing and totalitarian fantasies. Obviously, Baudrillard enjoys the terrorism of the spirit, but does he not realize that, beyond the playful, ludic aspect, his position is pathetic?

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Sovereignty, Empire, Capital and Terror

John Milbank

The question that one should ask in response to the immediate aftermath of the events of Sept. 11 is why there was outrage on such a gigantic scale? After all, people are killed in large numbers all the time, by terror, politics, and economic oppression. Within a matter of days after the attack on the WTC, the US already may have killed more people in response than died in New York, through increased and tightened sanctions in the Near East, whose main intention is clearly the terrorisation of civilian populations. So why this unprecedented outrage? There may be two answers here.

The first answer is the threat to sovereign power. It is, after all, sovereign power that is supposed to have the right over life and death, whether in Islam or in the West. The sovereign state can execute people. It can pass laws that increase the lives of some and decrease the lives of others. It can fight wars. It can impose sanctions that kill. Individuals who take upon themselves this right of life and death are considered to be criminals. But to kill on this scale throws everything into confusion. Is this a crime? No, it seems, because killing on this kind of scale is something only the state is supposed to be capable of. Is it then an act of war? Well, if so, then is it a different kind of war, because only sovereign states can wage war. It actually seems to be worse than normal war waged by a state, because it is a threat to the very idea of the state, and of sovereignty.

Ignore the pieties about the dreadfulness of terrorism. The West and Israel engage in many acts of terror, and terrorism has only arisen as a tactic of minority resistance in imitation of the new 20th century deployment of unabashed physical and psychological terror against civilians as a primary instrument of war. The terrorism that is seen here as being uniquely evil is the terrorism that assumes a power that is supposed to belong to states alone. The people who blew-up the WTC building were not anarchists. No, they were perhaps indeed members of a species of Islamic totalitarians, who wish to establish something like an Islamic International (in the case of Al Qaeda; whereas the Egyptian Hamas aspires to Islamic nation states). But their *mode of action* threatens the very idea of the state.

Answer two is that there was a hidden glee in the official outrage on the part of at least of some, though certainly not of others. The attack seemed to give an opportunity to do things which some factions in the West have wanted for a long time. What are these things? An assault on so called "rogue states"; a continuous war against "terrorists" everywhere; a policing of world markets to ensure that

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free market exchange processes are not exploited by the enemies of capitalism. But, above all, the attack provided an opportunity to re-inscribe state sovereignty.

The modern secular state rests on no substantive values. It lacks legitimacy of the sort which St. Paul ascribed to the "powers that be," because it exists only to uphold the market system, which is an ordering of a nonetheless substantively anarchic (and therefore not divinely appointed in St Paul's sense) competition between wills to power — the idol of "liberty," which one is supposed to worship. It is, of course, impossible to choose at all unless one is swayed one way or another by an influence: hence, a supposed "pure" free choice will only be a cover for the operation of hidden and uniform influences. People who fondly imagine themselves to be the subjects of their "own" choices entirely will in reality be the most manipulated subjects and the most incapable of being influenced by goodness and beauty. This is why, in the US today, and increasingly in Europe, there is so much pervasively monotonous ugliness and tawdriness that belies wealth as well so many people adopting (literally) the sing-song accent of self-righteous complacency and vacuous uniformity. Pure liberty is pure power: whose other name is evil.

The nation state creams off and piles up this pure power in the name of a people. Every modern state is inherently semi-racist, because it gathers around the notion of a people. This semi-racist holding together of a people requires an exterior — a potential enemy. As Carl Schmitt argued, the occasional emergency of war is crucial for (one must add, the modern) state's legitimacy. But globalization puts the modern state into crisis. There is now the prospect of no more exterior, no more real foes. Sovereign power is consequently threatened. If it remains merely domestic, it will wither away in the face of multiple loyalties. If it exports itself and drives toward the global state, then it still needs an enemy who is other. Without an external enemy, the enemy must now be internal, lurking everywhere. Without the possibility of the occasional emergency of war, there must be perpetual war against an internal danger.

Because of its history of expanding frontiers — its internal wars against native Americans, African-Americans, British loyalists, Spaniards in the South and West, the dissenting Confederate states, Southern and Central America, dealers in alcohol and drugs, and communists in the 1950s, the US has in a sense been long preparing for this new sort of global conflict. As Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri have argued in *Empire*, American neo-Roman imperialism works by a constant subsumption and inclusion of "others," such that difference is apparently welcomed, yet actually subordinated to an unremitting uniformity. This subsumption coincides with an obliteration of the older distinction between colonies as the extra-capitalist sources of "primary accumulation" and the fully capitalized home markets. Now all comes to be within the unrestricted one world market.

This contrasts with older European imperialism, which held the other at a subordinated distance, permitting its otherness, even while subordinating it for the sake of an exploitation of natural and human resources. And one should add

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to Hardt and Negri that, in the case of Britain and France, there were also many utopian imperialist schemes that went even beyond this subordination, and tended to deploy the peripheries and "savage" to mock the center and "civilized" (see for example Rider Haggard's *King Solomon's Mines).* Such nuances are shockingly overlooked in pseudo-left-wing American "post-colonial" discourses, which actually assist the ideology of the American Right by implying the original "innocence" of the US as a once colonized nation, and its natural solidarity with all the colonized. (The extraordinarily simplistic fantasies about Ireland, and the downgrading of the Anglo-Saxon as opposed to the Celtic contributions to the history of liberty, fall within this paradigm).

These implications tend to conceal the fact that American neo-colonialism is far more insidious than the older variety. It does not attend to cultural difference (like for example the British law code for India, assisted by the historicist and comparativist work of Henry Maine); it pursues no substantive goals of the political and social good (however deluded the ones of old empire may often have been); and seeks instead both for pure economic exploitation and for the absolute imposition of American signifiers. Under French and British colonial law, child labor was outlawed; now, within the "American Empire," but of course with total European connivance, it is everywhere rife. One can also note here that where British imperialism *was* purely economic, it tended also to be more corrupt and oppressive, as in the case of China and the opium trade (see Kazuo Ishiguro's novel *When We Were Orphans*).

While Hardt and Negri concede that neo-empire outdoes old empire in vileness, they still subscribe to a dialectical myth which renders this more nakedly capitalist phase of empire somehow a necessary staging post on the way to socialist utopia. Surely, needed are instead more sober reflections on the temporary need for some sort of more benignly parentalist assistance for the South from the North — given that so much of the South is devastated in its internal resources and in any case so bound up with the North that only global solutions will be viable are necessary. Tony Blair at times has such a vision. Unfortunately, it is utterly vitiated by his continuing devotion to the untrammelled market.

Instead, any enactment of this vision would require a withdrawal by the North from its unqualifiedly capitalist commitments. But the very opposite is the case: a fearful extension of American Republican imperialism, in terms of a logic which is impeccably Machiavellian. The unity of the Republic, snatched by fate out of time for the sake of its own negative freedom (and the negative freedom of its citizens in so far as this is secured through their absolute submission to the Republic) can only be secured through constant re-unification in the face of a threat to this freedom. Given that the Republic is isolationist, and has no interest other than its own freedom, it is not able to mediate with the other, even in an old-European hierarchical fashion. Instead, it can only withstand by subsuming, by expanding at least its frontiers of cultural reach. Commentators who have

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tended to think that Bush was jolted out of isolationism by the catastrophe miss the point that isolation and hysterical expansion are two halves of the American Republican dialectic. Moreover, the American sense that what is isolated and expanded is unquestionably the *acme* of human political achievement, frozen forever in an ideal constitution, disallows the self-denying ordinances, the sense of temporariness, of passing expediency, and of fearful desire to avoid *hubris* that is expressed, for example, in Kipling's poem *Recessional*. American imperialism never supposes that the Captains and the Kings must one day depart.

This is why, in an emergency that tends to release the unspoken truth, there has been so much apparently insane language concerning "infinite" processes: an infinite war, infinite justice, infinite retribution. This was sustained in Bush's terrifying address to the Congress. There, he declared, for the first time perhaps since Hitler's announcement of the Third Reich, a kind of state of perpetual emergency. He announced a new sort of war without aims or a foreseeable end, often to be fought in secret. Those not with the US and Britain in the war were declared to be against them and allied with terrorists. This is potentially a license for totalitarianism, and already, for the sake of fighting a vague conflict explicitly projected to last almost forever, it has become unquestionable that basic legal procedures and respect for people's privacy should be suspended.

The existence of a state of emergency was witnessed in the statement by Donald Rumsfeld (about which many of his colleagues exhibited understandable unease) that non-Afghan Taliban should be "*either* killed or taken prisoner." This was more or less a license to the Northern Alliance to kill these people like dogs, on the very dubious assumption that they were somehow implicated in the attack on the twin towers. Of course, even if they had been, the proper response would be to arrest and try them; yet, implicit in Rumsfeld's statement was an exceptional suspension of all normal legality: *both* the norms of criminal legality, *and* the norms of military legality. Because one is dealing with a threat to sovereignty as such, law as such no longer applies, since the merely formal, decisionistic basis of law in a state which exists only to undergird the market cannot appeal to a natural equity beyond itself. Without the state, there is, for the modern outlook, no good and evil, and therefore against the enemies of the state, neither morality nor law applies. They are neither warriors for another power or a counter politics whom one must respect as individuals, nor transgresssors of the law whom one must respect as malefactors deserving punishment and the instigation of repentance.

No, they have sunk beneath humanity, as later Dick Cheney confirmed. Captured "terrorists" he declared "do not deserve to be treated as terrorists. They do not deserve the same guarantees and safeguards that would be used for an American citizen going through the normal judicial process." This stark denial of the *imago dei* exposes the concealed racist basis of all human rights talk: a "universal" notion was invoked by the West in order to intervene in the internal affairs of non-white countries, from Turkey in the case of the Armenian massacre onwards;

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but as soon as the white West in threatened, it becomes clear that rights are things which archetypally belong to "American citizens" under "normal," which means local and not at all universal circumstances. This is all a very far cry from Harry Truman in 1945, who insisted against Churchill's barbaric proposal to shoot the Nazis in a corner that "this would not fit easily on the American conscience."

The suspension of all norms of legality is further confirmed by the stipulation that future secret executions of those covertly convicted of terrorism can be watched by the relatives of victims of Sept. 11. Here one is confronted with the purest barbarianism: in the past, or in the Islamic present, public executions possess at least the primitive rationale of visible justice and warning, while unwitnessed modern execution exposes a certain proper shame and hesitancy on the part of the state: but *selectively* witnessed executions obliterate the line between punishment and vengeance, since all that matters here is the death of the other power threatening "domestic" power and lives. How is one to interpret this as anything other than a kind of sop to a mass psycho-pathology?

Such emergency measures are not really being proposed, because of the unique character of terrorism, but rather because of the perception of a new threat to sovereignty and capital: hence, the new European anti-terrorist laws which define as terroristic any actions intended "to destroy [European] political, economic or social structures" and include "the illicit capture of state or government installations, the means of public transport, infrastructures, public places . . . ." seem more designed to inhibit militants than to catch terrrorists. As Alain Bournedine *et al.* put it in *Le Monde* (Nov 29, 2001): "Bin Laden and his friends are not in the habit of walking about without papers with bombs in their pockets; nor of occupying *usines* and banks: they direct them."

How does this unspeakably bizarre turn of events, whereby, in a matter of months, one air hijacking has led to the permanent suspension of ancient Anglo-Saxon liberties, including *Habeas Corpus* (in both Britain and the US) relate to the idea of a war of civilizations, which has also been in the air? Within the post-Hunsinger perspective, Islam has been seen as the other, outside the Western legacy and somewhat immune to Western post-Enlightenment values. However, Islam should be rather thought of as both other and yet not other.

Revived Islamic civilization is in some ways a challenge to the Western secular state, but it is also much more like a rival twin than one cares to imagine. Recent scholarship is showing just how Islamic the West has been, ever since the 12th Century. When the University of Oxford was founded in the late 12th century, some scholars there took over an essentially Islamic project for the experimental control of nature that was at first to do with optics and alchemy. The Cartesian turn to the subject, the idea of knowledge as detached representation of spatialized objects, the exposition of being as univocal, all have their long-term origin in ironically the Oriental thought of Avicenna (Ibn Sina). To say, as many do, that Islam was only accidentally, and for a time, the bearer of a Mediterranean

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civilization to which it was essentially alien, is quite untrue. Even though philosophy was less easily assimilated within Islam than in Christendom, Avicenna and other philosophers were still concerned with "prophetology," or the nature of inspiration, and this profoundly inflected their rendering of Aristotelian and Neoplatonic understandings of the soul. In this crucible, proto-modern ideas concerning subjectivity were forged, and then handed over to the West.

In 1277, the Christian West reached its crisis: certain drastic edicts issued by the archbishops of Paris and Canterbury meant that it decided more or less to outlaw the common Hellenistic legacy of Aristotle fused with Neo-Platonism, and blended with allegorical readings of the Hebrew Bible, which it shared with Islam, Judaism, and Byzantium. A common culture of mystical philosophy and theology, focused around analogy and ontological participation — which has tended to favor also social participation — was rendered impossible. The West went in one direction and Islam in another, since Islam too tended in this period further to outlaw this perspective. From now on, Islam became a doctrinally orthodox, scriptural and legalistic civilization to the exclusion of dialectics and mystical theology (apart from newly enhanced sufistic tendencies).

The conventional view is that from then onwards the West became secular and Islam became theocratic. But that seems to be a half-truth. In fact, by abandoning the shared mystical outlook, Western Christian theology started to look more and more like Islamic orthodoxy; it started to read the Bible more like *The Koran*, allowing only the literal meaning, and construing that more narrowly than hitherto. The new stress in the 14th century that only God's will makes things true and right, echoed earlier Islamic *Kalam* theology and some of the ideas of Al Ghazali. The West's attitude to evil, with ironically the Cathars safely defeated, started to become more Manichean, again taking over the unfortunate Iranian contamination of Islam by the primordial Zoroastrian tradition. But above all, in the political domain, the Islamic alliance of the absolute will of the Caliph linked to the will of Allah, and with the right to fight holy wars, is taken over by Christian thought. As earlier in Islam, so now also in the West, a merely *de facto* grounding of state sovereignty in absolute right to do what it likes, is linked to its mediation of the will of God. Thus, the early Western nation-state started to fight holy wars within Christendom. Modern Islam and Christianity are not after all so dissimilar in certain ways.

Theocratic notions of sovereignty are not simply something archaic within Islam that stands over against Western modernity. In many ways, theocratic notions are specifically modern in their positivity and formality (as Carl Schmitt indicated). Bush in a crisis has appealed to the supposed divine destiny of America and it is modern Judaism that has lapsed into a statist, Zionist form. There is now a terrible symbiosis arising between Zionism and the American Protestant and unChristian literalistic reading of the Old Testament in the Puritan tradition, which equates Anglo-Saxondom with Israel. Both ascribe to an idolatrously non-typological and non-eschatological reading of God's "free election of Israel" as if

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really and truly God's "oneness" meant that he arbitrarily prefers one lot of people to another (as opposed to working providentially for a time through one people's advanced insight — as Maimonides rightly understood Jewish election); and as if he really and truly appoints to them, not just for a period, but for all time, one piece of land to the exclusion of others. (Regina Schwartz's *The Curse of Cain*, which tried to distinguish true from idolotrous monotheim in the Hebrew Bible, is highly relevant here.) There is also an unfortunate tendency within contemporary theology to play down the Christian going beyond the law, which incoherently and anachronistically seeks a kind of alignment with post-Biblical Rabbinic law, as if this somehow had obviously more status for Christianity than Islamic law (even if the former often appears to be nearer to Christian charity).

Meanwhile, the Islamic Wahabist tendency to which Bin Laden *et al.* belong, is in some ways very modern. Opposed to all iconic images, all auratic manifestations of religion, it is urban, middle-class, fanatically puritanical. Its followers are prepared to compromise the Islamic tradition in so far as it stands firmly against usury. And they are thoroughly in love with technology. Bin Laden in the desert with his gun is surely an American anti-hero, perhaps a sectarian first cousin to Joseph Smith. For it is not an accident that the Mormons — that archetypical American sect, according to Harold Bloom — express such explicit kinship with Islam.

But, of course, the West and Islam have construed the legacy of theocratic sovereignty in very different ways. The West has invented a secular sphere that is neutral and unmystical: the sphere of a pure balance of power, whose control is nevertheless, in the last analysis, divinely sanctioned. Strict Islam knows only an expression of sovereignty through sacred laws. On what basis can one decide that an Islamic sacral state, especially if it took a more sophisticated form than that envisaged by the Taliban, is not permissible? And in reality, the apparent concern for women and others persecuted by these unpleasant people is fantastically hypocritical: as recently as 1998, the Californian oil giant UNOCAL, with US backing, was trying to enlist Taliban support in building an oil pipeline through Afghanistan from the former Soviet territories to the north.

The only possible basis for refusing the legitimacy of an Islamic state would be if Islamic men, and especially Islamic women, themselves decided that they no longer wanted such a thing. This decision would amount to a new construal of Islam, and a redefintion of Islamic community apart from the sanction of coercive law. Islam would then have to proceed in a more Sufistic direction. It is certainly not in principle up to the West to decide, but the West as it is presently constituted can tolerate this forebearance and all its implications. Yet, properly speaking, this is a debate that Islam should be able to conduct with itself without external impediment. Such a debate could help even the West to realize that genuine religious pluralism and tolerance means far more than merely respecting the private beliefs of the individual. Communities also are collective realities, which should be respected, within certain bounds of discrimination.

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A perpetual war against terrorism can be seen as an effort to resolve the crisis of state sovereignty in the face of globalization. Since, in a real sense, both the Western and the different Islamic state forms face the same crisis, one can go further and say that both terrorism and counter-terrorism, which will quickly become commingled and indistinguishable, are attempts to resolve this crisis.

But there is also another aspect to the crisis of globalization. This is economic, rather than political. The West and especially the US has expanded its economic hegemony since the end of the Cold War. Once there was no longer any need to pander to Third World regimes in order counter Soviet influence, the US, mostly supported by Europe, proceeded to set-up economic structures that operated entirely in its own selfish interests more than ever before, with the result that global inequality has vastly increased as well as environmental damage, which is sometimes the direct result of US intervention, as in Columbia at the present moment. These structures have included the liberalization of markets and removal of all inhibitions on stock exchange speculation, as well as the scandalous patenting of genetically tampered-with crops allied to the outlawing of the natural varietes produced, for example, in South America. But now these hegemonic economic structures show signs of starting to implode. Supply has been outrunning demand; there has been overinvestment in computer technology; a possibly rash selling off of Western interests in older manufacturing; and an allowing of domestic shares and economically crucial information to get into the hands of people who are potentially one's enemies. The US and Europe consequently are faced with a need to implement more internal regulation — but also with the specter of having already let things slip beyond their control.

The assumption has been that the market simply lines up with Western dominance. Now, however, it is becoming clear how a small number of hostile, politically motivated investors can reap devastating effects. Sept. 11 was like a kind of chiasmus — a crossing over and reversal. During the 1990s, Western power became more and more abstracted and virtual in character: dominating the pathetically real and material lives of people in the South. Now, suddenly the West was reduced to the Paleolithic. The abstract was still partly stored in two fragile standing totems with less resilience even than neolithic standing stones. This still fixed capital was simply knocked over. But meanwhile, in the face of the failure of Western information to stop this catastrophe, the terrorists, whoever they are, were manipulating information in order to seize the maximum abstract advantage.

Given the sheer convenience of war and military emergency to forces wishing to resolve the twin crises of Western sovereignty and Western capitalism, one has to ask to what extent these forces were, subconsciously or consciously, urging war before Sept. 11? The current war is a war against terrorism, which has suddenly become a global and immediate threat, though one was not generally told this before the catastrophe. And in fact, there is much evidence that global terrorism has been recently in decline rather than to

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the contrary. Therefore, there is every reason to suspect that this war is not simply a war against terrorism, but is rather a war potentially against multiple targets designed to ensure the continued legitimacy of the American state and the perpetuation of the neo-capitalist revolution of the 1980s.

Ever since January 2001 at the very least, crisis has surely been in the air. Bush withdrew from international agreements on ecology, weaponry, debt and the pursuit of justice — most ironically of all he refused to acknowledge that any American could ever be a war criminal, thereby undercutting the legitimacy of international juridical procedures against someone like Bin Laden. Meanwhile, communism in the East has been reemerging, anti-capitalism is reasserting itself in Western Europe, and under the banner of anti-globalization it is starting to coalesce with resistance movements in the South. Right along the Atlantic seaboard from the Britain to Portugal, there has been fury at America in the face of economically disastrous flooding probably linked with global warming and scarcely reported in the US at all. In Great Britain, the Conservative Party faces extinction, and public opinion, moving to the Left of Tony Blair, now favors more state intervention and action drastically to reduce corporate greed.

More seriously still, the socialist President of Venezuela (and friend of Fidel Castro) Hugo Chavez, has been flexing considerable political muscle in the face of the general failure of neo-liberal regimes in his sub-continent. In the face of American and European opposition, he has encouraged the OPEC countries to sustain a middling level of oil prices where market demand would have forced a drop. This, obviously, has implications for Middle Eastern politics, and for the US hegemony in that region. For some time now, reliance even on Saudi oil has started to look a dubious proposition.

Suddenly then, American and capitalist hegemony looks surprisingly fragile — although of course this should not be exaggerated. But, it must appear fragile enough to powerful right-wing think-tanks, which are in any case prone to apocalyptic scenarios. There will seem to them to be a frightening possible convergence of a protesting South America, Islamic nations rich in oil, revivified communism and a Europe more wobbly and more prone to anti-US sentiment than at any time since WWII.

Finally, the US is an increasingly unstable polity. Cultural and political shifts in South America would have ripple effects amongst Latino populations in the US; low election turn outs reveal a vastly indifferent and often alienated population; an 18th century constitution produces constant stasis and deadlock which cannot even deliver normal modern state infrastructures and welfare provisions which form a buffer against dangerous discontents of the underprivileged; the cultural gap between Coastal and Middle America could erupt into something serious; edgy rival oligarchies do not trust democracy to deliver security, but believe they have to manipulate the outcome of elections (as occurred in Nov. 2000).

In the face of this potential hydra, it is clear that the US establishment and the

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Bush administration is deeply divided and inconsistent. Pure isolationism has been one response. Yet, it has been clear to many that this is a very risky course. Those advocating a more aggressive and interventionist strategy on the assumption that American supreme power must never be challenged (a doctrine initiated by Madeleine Allbright: the Democratic Party is as guilty as anyone else in all this) were delivered, by good fortune or otherwise, a supreme present on Sept. 11.

Not only could national security henceforth override democracy without question, but also the immediate threat of terror for the moment pulled Europe, Russia, South America, moderate Arab States and China in line behind the US. They have been enlisted with varying degrees of enthusiasm and begrudgingness behind a military action which will assault all those who resist the sway of the global market as well as behind police deployments to ensure that the market and flow of information are not themselves used against the market and against this flow. In addition, a new unity of Americans, rich and poor, behind a ludicrously sentimental and inappropriately personalized patriotism, has been put into place. The fractures lurking ever since Nov. 2000 are for the moment sealed, although any manifest failure of "the war" (as is more or less inevitable) will cause them to appear again with a vengeance.

There can be no doubt that at the very center of this strange and multiple conflict stands oil. Detailed and objective analyses by *Le Monde* and many other reliable sources show that what is currently being played out in Afghanistan is not a war against terrorism, nor a response to the attack upon the twin towers, but *le nouveau grand jeu de Kipling.* Multiple interests are trying to seize control of one of the largest pools of natural resources in the world in the former Soviet and largely Islamic territories to the north. There is also an attempt by the gulf states to re-establish the ancient silk route to China, which would link these states all the way to Islamic Chinese communities. Hence, the economico-political states are enormous and also deeply confused. As already mentioned, the US initially sought to cooperate with the Taliban in building oil pipelines. But they proved far too unreliable partners.

It has become instead imperative for the US to lay oil and gas pipelines through a more manipulable Afghanistan. In the face of a rebellious OPEC, it badly needs a new pool of tame oil suppliers besides the increasingly edgy Saudis. At the same time, this new North-South resource-route will cut through the middle of the potential Islamic East-West trade and political axis. The new Afghan wedge that is being established involves also a new co-operation between the US and Russia: the naïve British were surprised to discover after the re-taking of Kabul that they were not much welcome; whereas Russian forces were creeping back in. The trade-off for the Russians is, of course, license to pursue there own brutal policies in Chechnya; just as the trade-off for India is a stepping-up of its quarrel with Pakistan. Does the world imagine that either trade-off is worth it in the long run?

Oil therefore is the clear focus of a crisis that has wider political and economic

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dimensions. There is conclusive evidence that war in Afghansistan was already planned before Sept. 11, which may even have been a pre-emptive strike by some Islamic forces or other. There are also unanswered questions about the somewhat implausible tardiness of the US reaction to the terror-strike at every level.

One does not, however, need to suppose any sort of conspiracy theory, even if this cannot as yet be entirely ruled out. Reactions to Sep. 11 in the US government were various and variously motivated: even George Bush kept on changing his tune, especially as between a police and a military response. However, one does have to ask why so universally and immediately this was compared to Pearl Harbor, when, after all, it was only a terrorist attack, albeit a horrendously successful one. One man destroying New York with a nuclear bomb would still be a criminal and not a warrior. One treats all warriors with more respect than criminals. Usually, one avoids seeing terrorists as engaged in war, because that is just how they want to be seen and starting a war is generally their aim. In the annals of terrorism, Al Qaeda has now been uniquely successful: the West has played their game at every turn.

Supposedly, a war is being pursued against Bin Laden, and yet it does not seem likely that if he were ever caught he would be treated in accord with the Geneva Convention. If terrorism were *really* the issue, then much the safer thing would be to stick to the discourse of crime and the practice of regular policing and due juridical process. Anything else, as the bitter experience of the French and British shows, only tends to increase the support of terrorist groups and legitimate their operations. As Ken Surin has pointed out, the ethical evil of terrorism is that, more than certain modes of conventional warfare, it directly instrumentalizes human life. But this means that any response which tends to do the same is uniquely ineffective: in losing the ethical high ground, it *also* tends to lose the strategic high ground. This has already happened to America, which has now bombed and killed innocent villagers supposed to be "harboring" terrorists (the results could not be seen on American television); together with Britian, it has bombed a prisoner of war camp at Qala-I-Jhangi fortress from the air, and has delayed the arrival of humanitarian aid after the fall of Kabul, thereby causing at least hundreds of deaths. Even were those who say that only "massive force" stops terrorism correct (and they are unlikely to be proved right in the longterm, because of the delayed "blowback" phenomenon), the implication of this would be that only a permanently terroristic state can stop terrorism — once again wiping out all moral distinctions between the respective parties.

The use of cluster bombs and the attack on unquestionably non-Taliban places like the village of Gardez (where seven civilians were killed) show that one is not even speaking about "collateral damage" here. Most crucial of all has been, not capturing Bin Laden, nor even overthrowing the Taliban, but rather exhibiting a show of terror intended to cow the entire region for the foreseeable future and bend it to the Western will. As very often in the past, from the war against Spain to capture of the Philippines, through Hiroshima and Vietnam and

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the Gulf conflict (where bombing has secretly continued), the US has deployed the terrorising of civilians and the use of "poisonous weapons" (condemned ever since antiquity by civilized nations) as a primary instrument of policy. Cumulatively, this reveals the relatively genocidal tendency of specifically Republican imperialism (commencing domestically with the Amerindians), and it amounts to an atrocity almost on a level with the Holocaust and the Gulags – raising the suspicion that US domestic democracy is a kind of harmless theatrical indulgence for the globally privileged. And this circumstance reveals that the trouble is not "totalitarianism" pure and simple, but the emptiness of secularism as such, and its consequent disguised sacralisation of violence.

But if this is an unjust *ius in bello*; is there not surely a just *ius ad bellum*? Well, the oft-used analogy here with medieval wars against pirates is not really right. Pirates in the Middle Ages were in many cases treated like criminals, in a period in which war was seen as a kind of police action—at least justified war. And because pirates were mostly afloat, they were a kind of isolatable anti-state in any case. Terrorists, by contrast, live like criminals in the pores of society, and cannot readily be reached by military means. There cannot be a just war against terrorists, because they are neither a sovereign state, nor do they necessarily represent a true rebel cause that will justify talking about civil war in some sense. Thus, it is not surprising that, as the fairly conservative politician Wayland Kennet pointed out in Britain, there was only a "rhetorical declaration of war" in Afghanistan, rendering it an illegal conflict from the point of view of international law.

Were this a war against terrorists, it would not be a just one. This is primarily because it would be a lunatically "disproportionate" action. In any case, not the perpetrators (still at large after thousands of death and the sowing of the seeds of untold future misery and future terroristic movements), but a sovereign state — which was ready to hand over the supposed perpetrators, and with whom the British Foreign Office recommended a deal — have been attacked. The idea that Britain or the US cares about the iniquities of the Taliban is ludicrous: they helped to create them; they are happy to tolerate the convenient Islamic atrocities of the Saudis; having totally failed to carry out there own ground war, they were quite happy to let the Taliban be displaced by the equally obnoxious Northern Alliance.

One must assume that the powers that be are cynically aware of all this. So one must also assume that the "war against terrorism" is a cover for other operations and purposes of the kind. Unfortunately, the chance for the Western state and the Western market to ensure its continued hegemony in the face of dire threat is also the chance of specifically modern Islamic fanaticism. Bin Laden's followers, among those who in other circumstances would deplore him, now increase by the hour. Soon, he may be a hero for more than simply Islam.

A war against a civilization cannot be won. And Islam could prove to be more united, less decadent and more resilient. Prophecy is perilous, but the point may have been reached where the only way out of a catastrophe that could potentially

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destroy the West is to abandon global idolatrous worship of sacralized absolute sovereignty, and the empty pursuit of power, in West and East alike.

Both empty secular power and arbitrary theocratic power, in their secret complicity, show no way forward. Neither enlightenment nor "fundamentalism" can assist in the new plight. Instead, one needs to consider again the Biblical and Platonico-Aristotelian metaphysical legacy common to Christianity, Judaism and Islam, and ponder ways in which this legacy may provide a certain area of common vision and practice, while at the same time respecting social and cultural spaces for exercised difference. Such a common vision would eschew all idolizations of formal power, whether in the case of individual "rights" or of absolute state sovereignty. Instead, it would trust that human wisdom can intimate, imperfectly but truly, something of an eternal order of justice: the divine *rapports* of Malebranche and Cudworth. A shared overarching global polity would embody this intimation in continuously revisable structures dedicated to promoting the common good insofar as this can be agreed upon. It would also embody this imperfection through the maximum possible dispersal and deflection of human power.

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War as a Tool of Liberal Cultural Hegemony[1]

Marco Tarchi

The events following the attacks on the WTC and the Pentagon have brought to the fore once again, even more clearly than in the past, the risk, in all countries of the so-called West, of a new form of liberal cultural hegemony threatening that freedom of expression which is the irreducible presupposition of democracy.

It may seem odd that in the 21st century, in "advanced" countries, a kind of dictatorship of thought could develop, based on an ideology that claims to be the defender of freedom of thought. In fact, this claim had resulted in the indignation and derision of those being criticized.[2] Yet, the evidence available concerning the two requirements — pluralism of opinions and free flow of information — that make possible the enjoyment of freedom is not reassuring. The censorship that the mass media (first and foremost television) exercises toward any dissent from the values and judgments legitimated by the official ideology is growing. What Alexander Solzhenytsin noticed in his Harvard speech immediately after the beginning of his American exile — that in the USSR it is necessary to imprison dissidents in order to shut them up, while in the West it is sufficient to deprive them of a microphone — has become common practice. What is worse, the process has not stabilized and is intensifying. It is becoming reconfigured as an operation for the preventive removal of germs of wrong thinking from the minds of individuals. It is the prescription for a civic education predicated on the cult of approved principles, universal and irrefutable, because they constitute the basis of the best of all possible worlds.

This is nothing new. Every epoch has produced its own political hegemony and the intellectual means necessary to impose and disguise it. What seems new today is the prefiguration of only *one* hegemony and the ability of the cultural apparatuses to checkmate potential threats, without recourse to violence. The dream of perfect domination, based on those ruled accepting the rulers' decisions, which has been doggedly cultivated by totalitarian regimes without the desired results, becomes increasingly real in a formally democratic context. In order to make further progress, however, additional efforts are necessary. The

1. An earlier version of this article has appeared in *Diorama Letterario* 248 (Oct.-Nov. 2001), pp. 1-11.

2. See the polemics which, among others, involved Angelo Panebianco, Fernando Adornato, Marcello Pera, Pierluigi Battista, and Dino Cofrancesco, in the special issue of *Diorama Letterario* 195 (Sept. 1996), on "L'Intolleranza Liberale."

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end of history prefigured by Francis Fukuyama is not yet a reality and there is still resistance to planetary homogenization. The psychological climate of emergency is the ideal context within which to pursue the further Westernization of the world, which is the vehicle of liberal ideological hegemony. This explains why, from 1989 on, there have been various wars justified in the name of Western values and accompanied by great efforts to contain dissenting opinions. The collapse of the Soviet empire, which for years had legitimated *a contrario* the pretenses of the superiority of liberal society, risked freeing "Western" public opinion from the limitations imposed by the enemy threat, resulting in calls for an accounting from the respective regimes of the inadequacies, wrong choices, and betrayed promises. Thus, there was a need to find other means to divert attention, and for this there is nothing better than a war.

Ever since radical questions concerning the morality of wars have been raised, the political classes that wanted to wage them have found valid justifications by appealing to the common good or the national interest. This is what happened with the Gulf War and with Kosovo. Camouflaged as international police actions in order to brand the adversary as a criminal and to portray oneself as a sheriff, they were organized in such a way as to strengthen old alliances, promote new ones, and reinforce the hierarchal relations already established during the Cold War. In both cases, military actions have been accompanied by campaigns of internal propaganda that have redefined the task of the intellectual as that of a supporter and a manipulator of consciousness.

Propaganda Techniques

As such, reactions to the Sept. 11 events mark a further escalation of this process. Although, in this particular case, the "war of communication" could not have been planned ahead of time, the well-oiled information machine has functioned perfectly from the very beginning. The new war has suddenly been prepared, justified, and administered competently by the "Western" media, which has internalized and automated the codes of NATO propaganda. All of this has taken place without specific directives, which helps understand the depth of the homogenization of contents and of the media's mode of expression in this part of the world. Aside from the required, expected, and on the whole useful exceptions, unleashed in order to vindicate the pluralism of the 1% against the 99% and thus provide even more strength to the plebiscitary effect, commentators suspected of heterodoxy have been extirpated from the scene.

This efficiency of the tools meant to direct and control public opinion, able to provide an image of unity that feeds the self-censorship of those who have doubts, has nonetheless a side that clashes with the intentions of those who guarantee it: by producing serial behaviors, it allows for their individuation and cataloguing. A survey of the arguments deployed during the first months following Sept. 11 by the mass media in order to configure the events within the framework

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desired by the custodians of today's hegemonic ideology illustrates the propagandistic logic that guides its management.

The Psychosis

As expected, the bloody events of Sept. 11 have generated a wave of strong emotions, running from horror to pity. These spontaneous reactions have immediately been channelled toward a collective psychosis of extrapolations and judgments lacking any objective foundations. The first *Leitmotiv* is that "nothing will ever be the same."[3] Obviously, this is not the case. The psychological blow to the US, a country that had never been seriously attacked in its own territory and was convinced of its destiny to dominate because of a feeling of invulnerability, has not changed the world, any more than innumerable previous cases of exterminations, crimes, and genocides. Yet, it was necessary to show the highest possible indignation. This explains the emphasis on the high loss of human life as a result of the destruction of the WTC: at the beginning there were predictions of tens of thousands of victims, then the figure came down to 6-7,000; eventually, the more realistic count by *The New York Times* was less than half that. Now the pages of newspapers were suddenly filled with color photos of the dead, the dispersed, and the rescuers — a privilege never extended to the victims of hate and terror that always fill news reports. Psychologists and psychiatrists were brought in to deal with the possible debilitating impact that the repeated viewing of airplanes smashing into the towers may have on children (which, instead, is often perceived as a bizarre video game scene). Most of all, there was an emphasis on the presumed, yet non-existent weakness of a country "under attack," the need to aid the wounded giant, as if it were no longer the earth's most powerful country. A few days later, however, this emphasis on weakness turned into a celebration of the country's "miraculous" resurrection. Allegedly, this was the fruit, not of the availability of enormous resources, only minimally affected by the killer planes, but of an unparalleled granite-like strength of will, unavailable to common mortals living in the flaccid peripheries of the West.

Naturally, in this media operation the victims play a leading role. No doubt, there are many of them. In an Orwellian way, however, they are "more equal" than the many others that wars and other conflicts have created in other countries. In this case, they are "kids, mothers, workers, housewives," and not the usual "Palestinians" or "Iraqi, or "Tamil."[4] Those who are not sufficiently moved by their death and do not draw publicly the due political consequences are immediately castigated. It is, however, a hypocritical spectacle. The pained intellectuals of the Western Front do not feel a similar sadness for other victims. They see the children killed in Iraq by the US embargo as the victims of the

3. Barbara Spinelli, "Resistere alla Tentazione della Moderna Apocalisse," in *La Stampa* (Sept. 13, 2001).

4. Gianni Riotta, in *Corriere della Sera* (Sept. 13, 2001).

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war-mongering of the Baghdad dictator, and overlook the thousands of victims, often civilians, that resulted from US air-raids in Grenada, Panama, Iraq, Yugoslavia, Somalia, Sudan. In such a context, the cynicism of those who unreservedly admit that the victims resulting from *just* causes are different from the rest sounds almost sober: "During WWII German and Italian cities were hit for days, months, years: the objective was to defeat Hitler's and Mussolini's regimes. The price has been hundreds of thousands of civilian victims. But the dictators have fallen and, thanks to democracy, the wounds have healed."[5] To reach the desired objective, one cannot have too many scruples. Thus, it is possible to argue that it is illicit to condemn the exterminations of civilians in Dresden, because it has produced salutary military and political results, or to go completely overboard and regard the attack on the Twin Towers as "Hiroshima II; something new, and even more horrible than Hiroshima."[6]

The Distortion of Causes and the Manipulation of Effects

The decontextualization of the tragic events of Sept. 11 plays an essential role in the media strategy to support the "Western" cause. Those who distrust ideological prejudices know that the pilots of the airplanes of terror do not come from nowhere. What they did were not terroristic acts, but war operations in a non-conventional war. As is well known by those who coined the expression "collateral damage," often used in relation to Iraq and Kosovo, these non-conventional warriors entail high civilian costs. This is the only kind of dehumanized war possible against countries whose military technological power is disproportionate with respect to the capabilities of their adversaries. They also know that terrorism and conspiracies have always been part of wars of liberation. In the present case, the cause of the explosion of "terroristic" violence is the role that the US has played for decades in the Middle East, not in defense of freedom (Kuwait is one of the world's least democratic countries, lacking free elections and representative institutions), but of its own interests, regardless of the local people's aspirations for justice

In a context where the media blots out dissenting opinions, very few remember this. According to Tiziano Terzani, "For some time now, undeclared wars are being fought with new means, away from the eyes of a world that deludes itself into believing that it sees and understands everything only because it can watch live the collapse of the Twin Towers. Since 1983, the US has repeatedly bombed Middle East countries such as Lebanon, Libya, Iran, and Iraq. Since 1991, the embargo imposed by the US on Iraq after the Gulf War has resulted, according to American estimates, in roughly half a million dead because of malnutrition, many of them

5. Guido Santevecchi, "Obbiettivi, Errori e Democrazia," in *Corriere della Sera* (Oct. 14, 2001).

6. Giovanni Sartori, "Uditi i Critici ha Ragione Oriana," in *Corriere della Sera* (Oct. 15, 2001).

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children. 50,000 dead per year are costs that generates in Iraq and in those who identify with Iraq a rage similar to those felt after the New York slaughter. What is important to realize is that there is a connection between these two rages."[7]

Liberals do not understand this, and the media presents an altogether different scenario. According to the Islamicist Bruno Etienne: "Americans have accumulated in the world a significant capital of hate ever since they are alone, i.e., after the end of bipolarism," and that "this hate has developed most of all — but not exclusively — in the Arab-Muslim world," where the Americans are "detested because of their support for Israel and their presence in Islamic places after the Gulf War."[8] Within journalistic circles, hardly anyone listens to him. With spectacular symmetry, the front pages of daily newspapers everywhere proclaim "We are all Americans."

Every argument, but also every subterfuge, is deployed to cancel out the relation between the bloody oppression of Palestinians and the equally bloody events of Sept. 11 (another "black September). There are speculations concerning the "unqualified manifestations of satisfaction" in the streets of Ramallah, without even a word concerning the enthusiasm which, in Yankee Stadium, accompanied the display of the tele-images of the slaughter of Iraqi soldiers and civilians retreating on the road to Bassora. Those who shudder with disdain in thinking about the Palestinian refugees celebrating the damage inflicted on the protector of their enemy say nothing about the Israeli "security expert," who publicly regrets "not having killed Arafat," or the airplane pilot who confesses that, when he drops his load of fatal ordnance he feels like "a football player during the Superbowl." The rebuke is reserved for those who, remembering the guilt of the US in the eyes of the Arab populations supporting Bin Laden, are accused of placing terrorists and victims on the same level. The media's obsessive focus on the attack on the WTC, rather than on the other, not-any-less-relevant attack on the Pentagon, is part of the same strategy. The wound inflicted on the icon of the military superpower bothers the US much more, because it demonstrates an unsuspected lack of military preparation. It has to be closed fast, because international public opinion was unlikely to have the same sympathy for those killed in the Pentagon that it does for the "innocent" victims[9] of the two skyscrapers.

At any rate, the occlusion of these motivations for the attack serves another objective. It implies that the attack was not a hostile act directed specifically against the US, because of readily identifiable reasons. The US is obviously

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7. See Tiziano Terzani, "Quel Giorno, tra i Seguaci di Bin Laden," in *Corriere della Sera* (Sept. 16, 2001).

8. See Bruno Etienne, "Dietro l'Odio non c'è solo Bin Laden," in *Corriere della Sera* (Sept. 26, 2001).

9. The news that in the WTC there were important operating offices of the CIA and of the FBI, annihilated by the hijacked airplanes, has been provided by the media with a great deal of discretion.

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expected to retaliate. This does not mean, however, that it should involve other countries in *its* war. The attack was not a declaration of war to a broader aggregation, of which the US would only be a part.

From the US to the West

Franco Battiato has traced with the most clarity the outlines of this misleading operation He has warned against "an equivocal rush toward disinformation." It is done by the Taliban as well as "the US, who have developed the thesis of an attack on the West. No, this is an attack on America. It was to be expected. . . . All those who have died concern us, as long as one does not use a double standard. . . . the innocent victims of the New York terror [should be] considered on the same level as the innocent Iraqi victims of a now senseless embargo. . . . Why is America the target? What . . . has led to this immense ethnic or pseudo-religious hatred?"[10] For liberal culture, Iraqi children do not count as much as the ones in America. The first can be characterized to an audience trained in pro-American prejudices as hungry, "because of Baghdad and its tyrant."[11] The second become the tools of the strategy dear to the NATO ruling classes: the exploitation of events for yet another turn of the screw in the relation of dependence between the US and Europe.

Given the premises of this dependence, the emergence immediately after Sept. 11 of a common line does not require exceptional efforts: it is the result of a conditioned reflex. It is a matter of unconditional solidarity. Having forgotten the embarrassment of the Parliament and the Commission of the European Union two days earlier, when they had been dealing with the spy network "Echelon" — a clear demonstration of how the US is aware of having interests different from those of the Old Continent — now editorial writers and television anchors compete in trying to convince their readers or audience that "We are all Americans" is to be understood in the most literal sense: it is the Europeans' duty to fight American wars and deal with the problems created by the US. The guilt complex tenaciously cultivated for decades ("the Americans have saved us from the threat of black and red dictatorships") is freely vented, and the rhetoric of the "free world," refuted by a long American tradition of supporting all kinds of collaborating tyrants everywhere, is once again the order of the day.

The offensive was immediate. Already the next day, Sept. 12, one could read that "in the sight of diabolical minds there are also [Europeans] and [their] values." No one knew yet who had hijacked and re-routed the planes toward their target; there were no demands and the suspicion of broad internal complicities was at least possible. Yet, there was unqualified talk of "an attack on the entire West," going as

10. Marzio Breda, "Battiato: Né con gli Americani né con i Terroristi," in *Corriere della Sera* (Sept. 28, 2001).

11. f[erruccio] de b[ortoli], "Il Terrore e la Democrazia," in *Corriere della Sera* (Oct. 8, 2001).

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far as to claim that George Bush was "not speaking rhetorically" when he mentioned a "war against freedom."[12] "The new enemy of the West" is accused of nihilism, and it is claimed that his "only objective" is "the annihilation of a civilization which he feels has humiliated him and confronts him with the strength of his wealth, and technical, economic and political progress."[13] "They want to weaken this ethical and political community called the West,"[14] wrote an editorial writer, who immediately appealed to Samuel Huntington's theses to interpret the still unfolding scenario. This is the theme of "Western superiority." It is not meant to humiliate the Arabs or the Third World so much as to keep in line Europeans and make them feel infinitely small before the great US. The point is to oblige Europeans to follow the US, in order to learn from their pride, redeeming themselves from the sin of not having known how to properly follow their example.[15]

In the following days, the idea of an inevitable fusion of European and American destiny was spread with hammering rhythms. The firemen's raising the flag on the ruins of the WTC was transformed into an updated replica of the classic liturgy of American invincibility: the planting of the stars and stripes on Iwo Jima. Here lies the root of the syndrome exemplified by Giuliano Ferrara in transplanting someone else's patriotism in order to forget the inability to cultivate one's own — which would imply at least a sense of alterity, if not of contraposition, with respect to the US. American isolationism, which should be wholeheartedly welcomed by European citizens that care about their own independence after the end of the Cold War, is raised as a scarecrow. The infantile rhetoric which traditionally saturates the speeches of American Presidents in solemn occasions is marketed as a virile instance of strength and wisdom. The chant "USA! USA!" heard whenever an "American boy" confronts representatives of the rest of the world in some sport event is transfigured into proof of an indomitable spirit and — who knows why! — in solidarity with the lost brothers on the other side of the Atlantic. The faces of infamous and threatening new barbarians loom on the horizon.

A Clash of Civilizations?

To those who ever doubted it, the attitude of the "Western" media after Sept. 11 demonstrates that for liberals, as well as their opponents, politics reduces to the contraposition of friend and enemy. Rarely, however, has there been talk of

12. Franco Venturini, "Il Nemico Invisibile e lo Scontro con l'Islam," in *Corriere della Sera* (Oct. 12, 2001).

13. Spinelli, "Resistere alla Tentazione della Moderna Apocalisse," *op. cit.*

14. Franco Venturini, "Diritti Umani e Mani Libere," in *Corriere della Sera* (Sept. 30, 2001).

15. This is the argument effectively articulated by the visceral invectives of Oriana Fallaci and Berlusconi. To obtain results, no exaggerations are spared. Only a few hours had passed, but already "anti-terrorism expert" from the FBI and the CIA feared attacks in Europe against the Colosseum or the Eiffel Tower, and talked about chemical or bacteriological weapons. See E[nnio C[arretto], "Se Attaccassero l'Europa Colperebbero il Colosseo," (interview with Marvin Cetron), in *Corriere della Sera* (Sept. 12, 2001).

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absolute enmity resolvable only though force, of good struggling against evil, of civilizations threatened by barbarism, as has happened after the Washington and New York events. Backed by its allies, American democracy has chosen to use the language typical of totalitarian regimes: propaganda to no end, self-flattery, and designation of an enemy ever less specific and ever more objective, mobilization of the masses from above, denigration of anti-patriotic sowers of doubts, increasing control of private life. Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld has had no reservations in hinting at the possible use of atomic weapons. Having bought into Huntington's theme of the "clash of civilizations," the fanfare of Western superiority has been played to the hilt.

Politicians and intellectuals have divided the tasks between them. The politicians had to forge a coalition to deal with an alleged planetary terroristic threat with the support of Muslim countries — some of which have suddenly been promoted to "moderates," in a sleight of hand in which dictators such as Musharraf have become far-sighted and reliable leaders. Intellectuals had to pave the way for the acceptance of the war on the part of public opinion everywhere, following the example of the demonization that had already produced excellent results in the earlier cases of Saddam and Milosevic. Thus, Osama and the Taliban have taken their place next to other leading figures in the gallery of anti-Western horrors, and the epithet "barbarian" is circulating once again.

The operation has unfolded on various levels. In order to impress those disinterested in political events, the Afghan leaders have been held responsible for the cultivation and commerce of opium. This, however, overlooks the fact that these lucrative occupations existed long before the Taliban took power, that there is no evidence that Al Qaeda derives any benefit from it, and that the drugs in question are consumed by millions of young people in a West so full of freedom, technology and well-being that they should have no reason to self-destruct with the narcotics distributed by the new barbarians for their own perfidious ends. For those better informed, there are more refined explanations. One unfolds on a conspiratorial level and explains "global terrorism" in terms of a destabilizing political project by the "rogue states" so disliked by the Washington Administration. From the very beginning, the American secret services have preferred this reading of the facts, without hiding its objectives. According to Marvin Cetron, the author of the FBI- and CIA-commissioned report, *Terrorism 2000*, "everything would have been much simpler if it had turned out that there was a state involved in these operations."[16] The name mentioned most often is obviously that of the Great Old Man, Saddam Hussein, with whom for some time now the Americans would like to settle accounts. In case of a failure to achieve full success in Afghanistan, the redirecting of the accusation and then of the bombers' targets on Iraq would deflect any hint of failure, assuage the furors of the man in the street, and find an

16. *Ibid.*

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ad hoc scapegoat.[17] Other lesser figures, from Saddam on down, could subsequently complete the maneuver.

Here the main role is played by "the clash of civilizations," through which all xenophobic pulsations or simply diffidence toward the Other on the part of those affected by mass Third World immigration — something for years censored in public, but silently cultivated in private — can now be vented. The few Islamic scholars who, despite the declared disapproval of "those in the know," are willing to speak and to point out that radical Islam is a reaction to the aggressive Westernization of Arab-Muslim countries, that it would be advisable to stop contraposing the West to Islam, because "Arabs are also Westerners," that "the East begins with India," and that the Americans "talk like Bin Laden" when they claim that "God is with us, because we know what is good and just, and we struggle against evil,"[18] remain marginalized. The ideology of the "men of ideas" follow other lines and aim at a broader target. It distinguishes fundamentalists from other Muslims, but it insists on the possibility that the first contaminate the second, thus unleashing a process which would threaten the "West" both from inside and outside.

The conviction that Western civilization is superior to all others, particularly Islam, is downplayed by the progressive wing of pro-American intellectuals, but is articulated by the conservative side.[19] Here, the assumption of Western values as the parameters of humanity, livability, and freedom creates a perfect tautology: For the West, what is "good" is its own civilization — exactly the same feeling of those who were born and grew up in different cultural contexts. Its most outspoken exponents are those who chastise the conviction that there are no univocal measures on the basis of which to establish a hierarchy among civilizations, i.e., cultural relativism, as "the main ally of Bin Laden and Co. in the West, their most precious fifth column, a disease of which the West is suffering for decades."[20] The reasoning behind such a claim is clear: if human beings have equal dignity (to deny it would be to deny one of the formally sacred principles of liberalism), the same is not the case for cultures, religions, and civilizations. Liberals are hostile to everything that lays beyond individualistic anthropology. Accordingly, "the logical error consists in thinking that what goes for individuals must also go for cultural aggregations. Cultural relativism is a degeneration of the principle of tolerance inscribed in

17. Already on Sept. 13, a member of the European Parliament, Jas Gawronski (someone very close to the American Administration), made his own contribution to the cause by writing that "it is possible to think that Saddam has plotted and used anti-US forces in order to launch a world-wide Jihad." See Jas Gawronski, "L'Ombra di Saddam il Grande Burattinaio," in *La Stampa* (Sept. 13, 2001).

18. Etienne, "Dietro l'Odio non c'è solo Bin Laden," *op. cit.*

19. Thus, Giovanni Sartori emphasizes that the West "is the civilization that has generated, more than any other, the 'good city,' the most humane, most livable, most free political city, the most open to all others." See Sartori, "Uditi i Critici ha Ragione Oriana," *op. cit.*

20. Angelo Panebianco, "Smemorati tra Noi," in *Corriere della Sera* (Sept. 26, 2001).

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liberal democracy."[21] Evidently, this principle authorizes tolerance only for the kind of behavior foreseen and/or prescribed by the superior culture that expresses it, actually creating discrimination between individuals of different categories (to be treated differently, forbidding them — if it happens to be the case — from holding traditions and customs disliked by the custodians of the "superior" civilization). In the meantime, if war and tension drag on, there will probably be a normalization of this intolerance toward those who dare to draw from the wealth of "Western" countries by moving there, while remaining unwilling to dispose of the identity which they have inherited through birth and education.

How to Impose the American War

The refusal to grant equal dignity to cultures other than the "West," and the resurfacing of a late-colonialist pride imply that there is already a clash of civilizations and that he who belongs to the world that defines itself as civil "cannot proclaim himself neutral without becoming an accomplice of barbarism."[22] Thus, the war that the US fights for the defense of its own security and of its own interests becomes a conflict between the "free world" and its enemies.

In order to obtain this result, establishment intellectuals must sell some assumptions to the public: a) the US is the country in which the values of justice and goodness are best cultivated and defended; b) these values are, or should also be the values of Europeans, Japanese, Australians, Latin-Americans and, tomorrow, who knows, even those Chinese converted by Wall Street; c) this US-led superior civilization is incompatible with Islam, which has generated the great fundamentalist threat; d) such a threat has now grown to the point of affecting the security of all Western countries, and therefore must be extirpated immediately.

At least three of these propositions are not only false, but difficult to spread. The injustices that characterize American society are well known: egoism, materialism, an unconscious and destructive consumerism that permeates the average lifestyle, an arrogance and contempt for the interests and values of others, etc. Thus, most people do not have any desire that their own countries, through a further act of subservience, become US clones. They also know that, up to Sept. 11 and beyond, the hostility of radical Muslims has been directed exclusively against US policy. Only by reconfiguring Islam as the West's potential foe do the other related messages follow, thus diverting attention from the key point: *the absolute lack of a common identity — of values and interests — between Europe and the US.*

This does not mean that there are no other arguments put forth concerning other fronts of the pro-American offensive, but they have little impact. Conservative intellectuals, the live-wire of the campaign to defend American interests,

21. *Ibid.*
22. Franco Venturini, "Quattro Incognite," in *Corriere della Sera* (Oct. 8, 2001).

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disseminate them only in order to increase the clamor of the advances.[23] If they were not enough to refute all those interested interpretations of the true "state of mind" of American society, all one has to do is to reflect on George W. Bush's claim during the crisis to the effect that he would "not launch a two million dollar missile against a ten dollar tent in the desert,[24] in order to hit only a camel."

Therefore, what is necessary to win over European public opinion is to create well-identifiable enemies. The external enemy is Islam. Officially, not all of it, but only its fundamentalist component, because the support or the benevolent neutrality of some Islamic regimes are indispensable for a favorable outcome of the American war. Beyond appearances, however, there is a greater target: the exploitation of not altogether unfounded motives of diffidence toward Middle-Eastern states and their populations. The point is to convey the message that, if one has to choose or otherwise the world will go up in flames, it is more sensible to stay on the side of those over-fed and primarily, at least for now, white Americans, rather than that of the ugly, dirty, non-believer and bad Arabs. To recast the question in cultural-historical-theological terms, as is being done by the few defenders of Islam in Europe, does not help to contain this campaign. The images that uphold it are not those of Avicenna, Avarroes, the learned suphies or Saladdin, of which the *habitués* of the TV converters know nothing, but those of drug dealers from the Maghreb.

What counts and has to be elaborated in order to reveal the incongruence of US and European interests is clarified once again by Huntington, with his usual cynical frankness. He has no scruples in claiming that what moves Bin Laden and his followers is the resentment against Arab governments and the US, something in which European nations are not minimally involved. He also admits that, in its wars, the US has always been concerned, first and foremost, with its national interest ("In the Gulf War, we could not allow Iraq to take exclusive control of most of the world's oil reserves"). But then he provides a reading of the situation that makes transparent the superpower's strategy: "Before Sept. 11, Europe and America moved separately concerning a series of questions, from transgenic food to the missile defense, to the European army. The events of Sept. 11 have totally changed this state of affairs. After the terrorist attacks, some European newspapers have written 'We are all Americans.' In this sense, Bin Laden has given

23. Thus, Sergio Romano writes that "the simple heroism of the police and of the firemen" makes it impossible "to talk about materialism, egoism and hedonism on the part of the US." See Sergio Romano, "Emozioni e Ragione," in *Corriere della Sera* (Sept. 16, 2001). Galli della Loggia goes even further in claiming that "the US is the only Christian country in the West. The only one that can answer a holy war with another holy war. . . . When I watch news reports from the US, I see crowds that pray with the hand on their heart and the eyes looking down." See "Occidentali & Cristiani. Galli della Loggia: un Errore Nascondere le Radici," interview in *Avvenire* (Sept. 27, 2001).

24. George W. Bush to a member of the US Congress, in *Corriere della Sera* (Sept. 26, 2001).

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back to the West a common identity." On this basis, the process of expanding US hegemony must aim at other objectives: "The US must encourage the 'Westernization' of Latin America and contain the slow drift of Japan away from the West and toward China . . . The West must maintain its own technological and military superiority over other civilizations."[25]

The success of forced Westernization implies recourse to a war against the external enemy, but also "the cleansing of the back roads" with the annihilation of its internal enemy: dissension. This is a target that can be better hit if provided with a negative label: anti-Americanism. Never tolerated by liberal intellectuals, the criticisms of American political choices, their model of society and the principles that define its collective mentality have recently become a kind of crime of opinion deserving the most severe punishment.[26] From here to the denial of the right to criticism there is much less than a step, which in the US has already been taken. The victim has been Bill Maher, the ABC talk show host, banished for "having held that 'coward' is not he who smashes a plane against a skyscraper, but he who launches a Cruise missile from 2000 meters away. . . As a preliminary result, the sponsors have withdrawn the advertising contracts and local stations have blanked out the program. Commenting on the case, Ari Fleisher, Bush's spokesperson, has warned all Americans: "be careful as to what you say and what you do, this is not the time for this sort of things."[27] Hit one in order to educate a hundred: the country that for liberals is a beacon for the whole world has learned old lessons from its enemy. Thus, the accusation of anti-Americanism becomes, in

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25. Samuel P. Huntington, "Osama ha Reso all'Occidente l'Identità Comune," interview with Nathan Gardels, in *Corriere della Sera* (Nov. 1, 2001).

26. According to what an editorial writer of *Corriere della Sera* wrote immediately following the Sept. 11 attacks: "There has been too much tolerance for an ideological anti-Americanism that has nothing in common with the right to criticism." See Venturini, "Il Nemico Invisibile," *op. cit.* This "nothing in common" is established exclusively by the journalist author of the *fatwa*. It is nothing new. Already at the beginning of the last century, the anti-Semitic major of Vienna, Karl Lüger, used to say: "Jews are those I say they are"; his liberal heirs apply the same canon to other subjects: to be (or to be judged) anti-American is not a matter of opinion, it is a crime. Why? Spinelli explains: anti-Americanism is the "humus that feeds those who are violent." See Spinelli, "Resistere alla Tentazione della Moderna Apocalisse," *op. cit.* This is a subversive idea like those outlawed in authoritarian and totalitarian countries. Worse yet: as already indicated, for Panebianco anti-Americans constitute Bin Laden's most precious fifth column, which "must be neutralized," naturally, "with words and persuasion." See Panebianco, "Smemorati tra Noi," *op. cit.* Why not, instead, by denying them the right to speak? The latter option is more probable since, to the extent that the "desire for vengeance against the Americans, against the rich and democratic West," are widespread, but "concealed under the ashes of words — inadmissible passions that are kept quiet in public but cultivated in private," the indictment of intentions and the attribution of occult meanings to the assertions of those who are suspects is not just legitimate, but a duty. McCarthyism is always in good health.

27. Goffredo Buccini, "La Bandiera Bruciata e Quel 'Bisogno' di Autocensura," in *Corriere della Sera* (Sept. 24, 2001).

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the conservative version, the pretext for criticizing the entire anti-globalization movement (which has immediately quieted down) and, in the progressive version, "the reactionary life-styles" of those who do not cultivate, day and night and with all due intensity, "the American Dream."

Pure and Simple Mystification

Naturally, these arguments, no matter how wrongheaded, have been aimed only at well-educated opponents. To the broader public, the media have reserved the spectacle, *le grand guignol*. It is difficult to count all the false leads — purely fantastic "information," inferences, and countertruths — spread in the mind of the common people. It began with the "unveiled conspiracy," the arrests of Arab suspects with pilot uniforms in Boston: a piece of news that eventually turned out to be unfounded. Then, it continued with alarmist warnings by the secret services concerning imminent and never carried out attacks against European "religious centers." Subsequently, there has been a shift to predictions of chemical-bacteriological planetary wars with "Chemical Attacks from the Sky on the US and Europe"[28] — something that has taken place only partly in the US, with the disconcerting events of letters laced with anthrax, so ineffective and so likely to have come from American labs that they could not even be attributed to public enemy number one. In order to give credit to the psychosis of the Islamic attack on Europe, the explosion of the chemical factory in Tolouse has been exploited, and five Afghan immigrants walking a few hundred meters from the Vatican have been passed as operators with sophisticated topological maps. Held a few hours and mentioned in all television reports and on the first page of newspapers to document the pending Islamic fundamentalist threat, they were soon released with so many apologies.

Waiting for the bombing to begin, there was a shift to edifying diversions, with handwriting experts concluding, on the basis of analyses of their respective signatures, that Bush was "decisive," while Osama was "depressed," and doctors willing to provide diagnoses of serious illnesses after having seen the first video of Bin Laden in a cave. After the hostilities began, there have been lies of all kinds: from the clashes of British troops with the enemy, to the disintegration of the Taliban Army with 100,000 defections a day, from the commandos intent on "screening" the Afghan territory, to mullah Omar, who escapes thanks to a "bureaucratic detail," to the deaths that the GIs are about to inflict, from the betrayal of foreign minister Mattawakil, to Kandahar "pulverized." All this is dished out by newspapers that one day carry headlines such as "For Omar's Men, it is Hell" and the next day fear a stall in the Anglo-American military operation.[29] This means that another prerequisite on which liberal societies base their own superiority — informational transparency — is also gone.

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28. A title in *Corriere della Sera* (Sept. 24, 2001).

29. See, e.g., the titles and the articles in *Corriere della Sera* from the 17th to the 18th of Sept. 2001.

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How to Resist Thought Dictatorship?

In one of the most courageous commentaries concerning the Sept. 11 events, Terzani has written that even in Europe, "there has been a desperate race to orthodoxy. It is as if the US already threatened us."[30] Things are even worse: America puts Europeans in place, not because it is intimidating, but because it can count on the widespread sense of inferiority that afflicts intellectuals all over Europe, ever since the old continent has ceased to believe in itself. The European political classes have willingly lowered themselves to the level of assistants to the American superpower.[31] This means a return to the climate predominant immediately after WWII, to a mortified country waiting for the Marshall Plan: it is from Washington that the colonial administrators take their directives. There is no need to be afraid of America in order to obey. Except for Britain, everywhere else it suffices to continue to suffer the complex of powerlessness that for decades afflicts Europe: to feel eternally indebted to Big Brother on the other side of the ocean and, because of this, confuse its self-serving actions for gestures of magnanimous benevolence.

Yet, in order go beyond this conditioning, it would be enough to find the courage to reflect on the autonomy of thought. There is no lack of solid arguments to take into consideration, even in this opaque climate of widespread self-censorship. Some of them are provided, once again, by Terzani: "The attack on the Twin Towers . . . is not an act of the Muslim extremists' 'religious war' seeking to conquer our souls, a kind of Crusade in reverse . . . It is not even 'an attack on Western freedom and democracy,' as claimed by the simplistic formula now used by politicians. An old professor at the University of California at Berkeley, a man beyond suspicion of being anti-American or of sinister symphaties, provides an altogether convincing interpretation of this history. As Chalmer Johnson writes in the Oct. 15 issue of *The Nation*, 'The suicidal killers of Sept. 11 did not attack America: they have attacked American foreign policy.' Accordingly, . . . it would be a matter of yet another response to the fact that, despite the end of the Cold War and the disintegration of the Soviet Union, 'the US has kept intact its imperial network of about 800 military installations throughout the world' in order to be able to organize 'intrigues, conspiracies, *coups d'état*, persecutions, assassinations and interventions in favor of corrupt and dictatorial regimes' in Latin America, Asia, Africa and the Middle East'." Terzani goes on to point out that "with all that is being written concerning Afghanistan, very few have emphasized that the great interest for this country is tied to the fact that it is the obligatory passage of any pipeline meant

30. Tiziano Terxani, "Il Sultano a San Francisco," in *Corriere della Sera* (Oct. 8, 2001).

31. It should not surprise if a leading intellectual who seeks to render this predicament irrevocable writes that "the moral authority and the necessary credibility" for a political power that wants to intervene in questions of foreign policy in Italy depend on a "*total* sharing of foreign policy choices in a situation of emergency." See Angelo Panebianco, "Governo Incerto Opposizione Spenta," in *Corriere della Sera* (Oct. 24, 2001).

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to bring the immense resources of methane and oil of Central Asia (i.e., of those former Soviet republics now all of a sudden allied with the US) to Pakistan, India, and, from there, to the countries of South East Asia. All of this, without having to go through Iran . . . It is thus possible that behind arguments concerning the necessity of protecting freedom and democracy, the imminent attack against Afghanistan conceals also other less honorable considerations, not any less determining."

This is how things stand. But in order to keep public opinion distracted, liberal intellectuals flood the media with arguments that cannot be challenged, false news and one-sided commentaries. It is an effective manipulative strategy that leads many to believe that the bombing that slaughters civilian populations is really part of a defensive conflict meant to extirpate evil from the earth. There is no mention of the motives of one of the parties involved, thus creating a scandal if a poll shows that 30% of Italians understand them (notice, the do not "approve" of them), and praise every move the Americans make in Afghanistan in order to conceal the calvary that Israel imposes on the Palestinians in their land, in a cynical escalation of violence. It even brands as cowardly terrorists those who struggle with every means available in order to defend the right to have a homeland against an oppressive state, an army equipped with the latest military technology, and security services with an unlimited license to kill, with full American support.

What can be done? On the level of immediately political answers, very little. The conditioning mechanisms at the service of liberal hegemony monopolize resources and the means of expression accessible to the masses, obtaining a strong control over collective consciousness without having to deploy any coercive means. On the moral level, a lot. One can and must resist, by showing that there are still some voices that refuse to bend to the law of conformity. Defamation and, if possible, an even greater isolation have to be taken into account, but it is indispensable to keep alive an oasis where pro-American prejudices are not predominant, where the dictators over thought are fought, where one can dare answer "no!" to the call to war that the masters of the world extend to their serfs.

In characterizing their "anti-American" adversaries, NATO intellectuals claim that they blame the US for all of the world's problems, and of doing so for inadmissible reasons. The accusation does not stick. We only blame the US for those things that it is and continues to be responsible for. As for our objectives, what motivates us is only the desire to show that we are and remain Europeans, aware of an identity that differentiates us from those who want to deny us independence and intend to continue using us for their own ends. We do not feel like Westerners, we are not Americans, we do not feel any instrumental assimilation with the Islamic cause. We want a plural universe based on people's rights and on the respect of the person. We believe that the West is not the best of all possible worlds and, in saying so, we know that we are defending the right to free expression of ideas in a historical moment when those who claim to have discovered and promoted it do all they can to deny it and bury it.

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The Military Significance of September 11

Gary Ulmen

The Sept. 11 attacks on the WTC and on the Pentagon were acts of war whose military character defines an altogether new geopolitical predicament. Here, the nature of the enemy is crucial. The perpetrators of these attacks have defined themselves as *foes*, and have waged war against civilians.[1] By contrast, the US and its allies have refused to regard the enemy as a *foe*. This peculiar situation calls for an examination of the changed nature of war, and what this entails, not only with regard to the conduct of hostilities, but also to the treatment of prisoners.

There have been attempts to develop a new "doctrine" of war, but they have been largely couched in conventional categories of nations and national forces.[2] John Keegan is closer to the mark when he points out that war has escaped from state control and into the hands of terrorists, bandits, and criminals.[3] While these groups often command large arsenals previously affordable only to tax-raising governments, they do not obey the rules binding on sovereign governments and their war aims are different. War *has* escaped from state control, but the reason is that the state is becoming historically obsolete. Indeed, this process has been going on throughout the 20th century. To some extent, the decline of the state was prolonged by the Cold War. When it ended, so did old friendships, and new enmities appeared. Given the decline of the state, some of these enmities have developed inside, outside, and even against the state.

Sept. 11 may be considered the beginning of the first "post-modern" war. Of course, "post-modern" wars began before Sept. 11 in various parts of the world.

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1. As Schmitt has noted, an enemy is a legitimate partner in war, who should be treated with respect, and, when captured, as a "just enemy" (*justis hostis*), whereas a *foe* is to be given no legal quarter and is to be destroyed by whatever means possible. Cf. George Schwab, "Enemy or Foe: A Conflict of Modern Politics," and G. L. Ulmen, "Return of the Foe," both in *Telos* 87 (Summer 1987), pp. 194-201 and 187-193 respectively.

2. Thus, James Webb writes: "The key elements of a new doctrine seem obvious. We must retain our position as the dominant guarantor of worldwide stability through strategic and conventional forces that deter potentially aggressive nations. We must be willing to retaliate fiercely against nations that participate in or condone aggressive acts, as well as non-national purveyors of asymmetric warfare. But we should take great care when it comes to committing large numbers of ground forces to open-ended combat, and we should especially avoid using them as long-term occupation troops." See James Webb, "A New Doctrine for New Wars," in *The Wall Street Journal* (November 30, 2001).

3. John Keegan, "The Changing Face of War," in *The Wall Street Journal* (November 27, 2001).

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But Sept. 11 was the defining moment. Modern war came into being with the sovereign European state, which initiated "the modern age" by ending religious and civil wars, and thereby becoming the main agency of secularization. The sovereign European state had the monopoly of politics and thus the monopoly of power and violence. Once the European system of states was established — what Schmitt called the *jus publicum Europaeum* — war was confined to conflicts among sovereign states, and was fought among state-organized armies.[4] Although the European state structure began to dissolve at the end of the 19th century, the rest of the world continued to subscribe to this model and to Eurocentric international law, at least until WWI. This is even true of the US, even when it challenged this system and sought to construct an American international law. Modern war was limited, i.e., there were certain laws of war and enmity that obtained among belligerents. The enemy was considered to be a *justis hostes*, i.e., a just enemy, and was treated as such. This was still true in WWI, although by the end of that war the European system had collapsed. WWII was a "total war" against both military and civilian populations. Yet, there was still a nod to European international law in the treatment of civilian populations and prisoners-of-war, even though the German and Japanese occupying armies grossly violated these laws.

In many respects, "post-modern" war is beyond Clausewitz, not just because he focused only on land war, and thus never dealt with sea or air war, but also because of his exclusively European focus.[5] According to him: "War is nothing but a duel on a larger scale."[6] This could have been written only by a European, and it was true only in Europe and of "modern" war. Clausewitz concludes that: "War is thus an act of force to compel our enemy to do our will." But what if the will of the enemy is to exterminate "infidels"? This is no duel, and this is no "just enemy," but rather a *foe*. Of course, Clausewitz does recognize the primacy of *hostile intent* over *hostile feelings*,[7] but he is primarily concerned with the "political object of war," i.e., the original motive.[8] Then, there is his famous claim: "War is merely the continuation of politics by other means."[9] For him, politics

4. Civil wars did beak out from time to time, and it often meant the dissolution of particular states. But this did not affect the basic structure of the *jus publicum Europaeum*.

5. Cf. Peter Paret, *Clausewitz and the State* (New York: Oxford University press, 1976); Carl Schmitt, "Clausewitz als politischer Denker: Bemerkungen und Hinweise," in Günter Dill, ed., *Clausewitz in Perspective: Materialien zu Carl von Clausewitz: Vom Kriege* (Vienna: Ullstein Verlag, 1980), pp. 419-449, esp. pp. 442-443; and Julian Freund, *L'essence du politique* (Paris: Editions Sirey, 1965), pp. 590ff.

6. Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, ed. and tr. by Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976), p. 75.

7. *Ibid.*, p. 76: "Savage peoples are ruled by passion; civilized peoples by the mind. The difference, however, lies not in the respective natures of savagery and civilization, but in their attendant circumstances, institutions, and so forth.".

8. *Ibid.*, p. 80.

9. *Ibid.*, p. 87. The English translation uses the word "policy" instead of "politics." See Carl von Clausewitz, *Vom Kriege*, 19th ed. (Bonn: Ferd. Dümmlers Verlag, 1980), p. 210.

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and the state were inseparable. The state was the only political entity he knew.

As Schmitt put it, "The equation state=politics becomes erroneous and deceptive at exactly the moment when state and society penetrate each other. . . . In such a state, therefore, everything is at least potentially political, and in referring to the state it is no longer possible to assert for it a specifically political significance."[10] Schmitt foresaw the end of the state monopoly of power and violence, and therefore the end of the state. He understood that some new form of political organization would eventually take the place of the state, but in the meantime he was forced to consider the nature of the political. He came to the conclusion that "The specific political distinction to which political actions and motives can be reduced is between friend and enemy."[11] Given recent events, the wisdom of this simple formula is all too evident. First, politics escaped from the state. Now, war has escaped from the state. Whatever new form ultimately replaces the state, the political is very much to the fore, as is the changed nature of war.

According to Martin van Creveld, toward the end of the 20th century it was becoming apparent that the third characteristic of the state — the fact that it has a *persona* — was starting to make the other two characteristics, i.e., sovereignty and territoriality, redundant.[12] The threat to the state was no longer coming from individuals or groups that exercised the functions of government in various communities after 1648. Now, it was coming from other corporations, i.e., from other "artificial men," who share the state's nature, but differ from it both in respect to their control over territory and in regard to the exercise of sovereignty. Some of these corporations have a territorial nature, but most do not; some are regional and larger than states, others smaller and merely local; some are inter-governmental, others non-governmental; some are primarily political, others more interested in making money, protecting the environment, spreading some religious message, or propagating some special cause. But, all have in common that they are more attuned to modern technology, communication, and transportation than is the state — at least, most states.

This state of affairs leads to the "transformation of war,"[13] but here Crefeld does not follow through on the logic of his argument. What is at stake is not really the transformation, but the *deformation* of war. As Schmitt points out in his overview of the Eurocentric age,[14] when the pure state war of the new European international law sought to overcome conflicts among religious factions, and to end both religious wars and civil wars, war became "war in form," because only by

10. Carl Schmitt, *The Concept of the Political* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1996), p. 22.

11. *Ibid.*, p. 26.

12. Martin van Creveld, *The Rise and Decline of the State* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 416.

13. Martin van Creveld, *The Transformation of War* (New York: The Free Press, 1991).

14. Carl Schmitt, *The* Nomos *of the Earth in the International Law of the* Jus Publicum Europaeum, tr. by G. L. Ulmen (New York: Telos Press, forthcoming).

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limiting wars to conflicts between territorially-defined European states could a conflict between these spatially-defined units be conceived of as *personae morales*, i.e., moral persons, who would contend with each other according to the mutually-accepted rules: the *jus publicum Europaeum*. The state gave form to war. But the state also has lost its form in this sense, and thus war has become formless.

A glaring example of this situation is President Bush's declaration of a "war on terrorism." As Terry Jones put it: "How can you wage war against an abstract noun?" Of course, the US is not waging war against Irish terrorists, Basque terrorists, or even Palestinian terrorists. It is waging war specifically against Al Qaeda. Had President Bush understood the changed nature of war, rather than unwittingly demonstrating it, he might have avoided his reference to an "axis of evil" that includes Iraq, Iran, and North Korea. However culpable these regimes may be, this scatter-gun approach manifests just how formless war has become. Bin Laden also failed to understand the nature of "post-modern" war, since he perceived the American withdrawal from Somalia and its failure to respond to terrorist attacks against its facilities to be signs of weakness and lack of political resolve. Both friends and enemies must get up to speed.

According to Creveld, future wars are no longer going to be waged by armies, but by terrorists, guerrillas, bandits, and robbers; and their organizations most likely will be constructed along charismatic, rather than institutional lines, and be motivated by fanatical, ideological loyalties.[15] While clearly subject to some leadership with coercive powers at its disposal, that leadership would hardly be distinguishable from the organization as a whole. Thus, it would bear a greater similarity to the proverbial "Old Man of the Mountain" than to institutionalized government. While rooted in some popular base, that population would probably be indistinguishable from its immediate neighbors or from those, always the minority, who do most of the active fighting. Moreover, a war-making entity of any size would have to be "in control" of some territorial base, but that base would not necessarily be continuous, impenetrable, or very large. Finally, its "frontiers" — a modern term — would probably not be marked by a clear line on the map, occasional roadblocks might appear in unexpected places, manned by ruffians out to line their pockets. Such a description is not too far off from today's Afghanistan. Creveld, however, insists that the most important element of any "political community" must be protection, and that a community unable to safeguard the lives of its members is unlikely to command their loyalty or to survive very long. Thus, he seems not to have conceived of the mentality of Bin Laden and Al Qaeda, whose fighters have no more concern for their own lives than for those of others.

For Edward Luttwak,[16] new wars take on a "post-heroic" character, i.e., as wars that can be fought in remote, technical ways that do not seriously risk any

15. Creveld, *The Transformation of War*, *op. cit.* p. 197.

16. Edward N. Luttwak, *Strategy: The Logic of War and Peace*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001).

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casualties. A tacit precondition of a Great Power was the readiness to use force whenever it was advantageous to do so, accepting the resulting combat casualties with equanimity, as long as their number was proportionate to the gains. These Great Powers were normally able to rely on intimidation, rather than actual combat, but only because it was taken for granted that they would use force whenever they desired. Moreover, a Great Power would not limit its use of force only to situations in which its vital interests were in danger. That era obviously is over, as can be seen by the abrupt US abandonment of Somalia after the loss of 18 American soldiers in October, 1993. At the same time that the US left Somalia, Britain, France, and Germany refused to risk their troops to resist aggression in the former Yugoslavia. Fearing reprisals against their own troops, it was only with great reluctance, after almost two years of the most horrific outrages against civilians since the Third Reich, that Britain and France finally consented to carefully-circumscribed and UN-authorized air strikes by NATO aircraft, in February, 1994.

Formerly, European Great Powers would have viewed the disintegration of Yugoslavia as an opportunity for exploitation, and the power vacuum would have immediately been filled. Since Luttwak had only the Gulf War as a point of reference, he claimed that combat can now occur by remote bombing, with no ground forces at risk. He also acknowledged, however, that Bosnia, Somalia, and Haiti showed that the typical Great Power business of "restoring order" still requires ground forces[17] Yet, the US war in Afghanistan has been fought largely with strategic aircraft, without allies, and without infantry. Casualties have been minimal, however heroic the actions. In short, it has been fought as a "post-heroic" war.

Many lessons have been learned already in the war in Afghanistan.[18] Despite recent innovations in military doctrine, organization, and hardware, geography still matters. Also, in the absence of regional allies or bases, a transformational military posture must be able to guarantee access by combining long-range aircraft, sea-based forces, and space assets. Last, but not least, the revolution in military affairs is real. Information technology has produced huge gains in war-fighting capability, so that missions that took days to plan in Desert Storm and hours to plan in Kosovo have taken only minutes to plan in Afghanistan, and the precision with which they have been executed is unprecedented. The critical feature in this military revolution is "network-centric" warfare, which requires continuous, high-speed communication among all fighting components. The result is that all units have a

17. *Ibid.* p 74: "In the end, the infantry, albeit mechanized, is still indispensable — and now mostly unavailable because of the fear of casualties. The high birth-rate countries of the world can still fight wars by choice, and several have in recent years. But even those few among them that have competent armed forces lack other key Great Power capabilities, such as a significant strategic reach or broad intelligence coverage. As of this writing, the military authorities of the United States and of Europe have yet to contend with post-heroic limitations, whose very existence they tend to deny."

18. See Loren B. Thompson, "The Lessons of 'Enduring Freedom'," in *The Wall Street Journal* (Jan. 7, 2002).

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common picture of the battle area, reflecting inputs from dozens of sources, including unmanned aerial vehicles, and Special Forces on the ground.[19]

If the conduct of war has been digitally revolutionized in the air over Afghanistan, it has been redefined by the success of Special Forces and Special Operations on the ground.[20] Army Special Forces usually take months, if not years to cultivate relations with friendly regional powers. Though Special Forces had trained with some Central Asian militaries, they had never worked with Afghans before the war began. Moreover, before the war, the task of attacking Bin Laden and his supporters and of bolstering the anti-Taliban resistance belonged solely to the CIA. In Afghanistan, Special Forces are working in unison with the CIA, which is a real innovation. While the use of Special Forces to build an opposition army in Afghanistan was straight from the doctrine of unconventional warfare, their wholesale integration into the air war is another innovation. The "strategic" plan became more "tactical" when Special Forces teams proved to be so effective at spotting targets for American bombers and attack jets. Finally, while the Pentagon had struggled for years to blend Special Operations forces — with their distinctive training, peculiar weaponry, unorthodox tactics, and culture of secrecy — into the joint operations of land, sea, and air forces, in Afghanistan this was the goal from the outset.

Also relevant in this connection is Luttwak's discussion of the limitations of remote bombardment, which were dramatically exposed by the Kosovo war. The first limitation was the potential for "collateral damage," i.e., targeting accidents that injure or kill civilians. The second limitation was the priority of avoiding any risk to native pilots, which made it impossible to protect the persecuted Albanians on the ground. But, the US war in Afghanistan already has demonstrated the possibility of eliminating at least one of these limitations, and greatly diminishing the second. Special Forces and Special Operations on the ground were able to pinpoint targets, thereby not only increasing the efficiency and technical expertise of aerial bombardment, but greatly reducing the chance of civilian casualties. Another significant innovation in the evolution of post-modern, post-heroic war is the use of what might be called proxy troops, i.e., indigenous soldiers. In Afghanistan, most of the fighting has been and is being done by Afghan warriors, who have been trained and are being guided by American Special Forces and Special Operations forces. The same strategy is now being used in the Philippines, and no doubt it will be further developed and employed in other war theaters. In short, American military and technical expertise, supported by air power,

19. One aspect of this military revolution that could be observed in Afghanistan was that, even though digital technology was inserted successfully into decrepit, out of date aircraft, the need for new aircraft was all too obvious.

20. The term Special Forces refers only to the Army's Green Berets, whereas the term Special Operations forces encompass all unconventional warriors in all the services. See Thom Shenker, "Conduct of War Is Redefined by Success of Special Forces," in *The New York Times* (Jan. 21, 2002).

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will further dispense with the need to send American infantry abroad.

The war in Afghanistan has also demonstrated that the US military is now technically so much more advanced than its NATO allies, including England, who have been falling behind for years in defense spending and in the willingness to exert a military posture beyond their borders, that it will be increasingly necessary for the US to act unilaterally. Given the fact that wars now can be handled not only by digitally-directed planes in the air and by Special Forces and Operations on the ground, the need for NATO as a fighting force has been greatly diminished, and this will no doubt continue as the US increases its defense budget. Individually and collectively, however much they may complain about American unilateralism, NATO countries have proven both unwilling and unable to increase their defense budgets proportionately, and to undertake actions even as close to home as the former Yugoslavia without US guidance and participation. Of course, the US should continue to pursue multilateralism in the political arena, where allies and friends are both important and necessary. But the changed nature of war has changed the role of military blocs, and this process will no doubt be intensified.

Not only did precision bombing and real-time communication turn out to be far better in Afghanistan than in the Gulf War, but the US military demonstrated that it had successfully incorporated — with great adaptability and ingenuity — the high-tech revolution. This was not a victory for "big government," but an indication that this and future wars will not require national mobilization, as was the case in WWII,[21] and not even the draft for a smaller conflict such as the Vietnam War. The military-technical complex that has developed is less extensive and more intensive, less economically self-serving and more politically transparent than the old military-industrial complex.

If the nature of war has changed, so, too, has the nature of the enemy. The Sept. 11 attacks appear to substantiate Samuel Huntington's thesis on the "clash of civilizations,"[22] but only if one allows Osama Bin Laden and Al Qaeda to define the struggle as a war between Islam and the US, or between Islam and Western civilization. The US and its allies have rejected this characterization, and have deliberately included moderate Muslim scholars and religious leaders in all of their memorials and deliberations. The leading Western Islamicist, Bernard Lewis, has pointed out that "classical Islam in all its different versions has never permitted suicide," the "laws of jihad categorically preclude wanton and indiscriminate slaughter," and "the classical jurists of Islam never remotely considered . . . the kind of unprovoked, unannounced mass slaughter of uninvolved civil populations that we saw in New York."[23]

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21. Cf. Michael Borne, "Not a Victory for Big Government," in *The Wall Street Journal* (Jan. 15, 2002).

22. Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996).

23. Bernard Lewis, "Jihad vs. Crusade," in *The Wall Street Journal* (Sept. 27, 2001).

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Yet, the Sept. 11 attacks do have something to do with Muslim culture in general, and Islamic fundamentalism in particular, which has been a problem for at least the last 30 years. In a concise study of the Muslim world's responses to the West completed before Sept. 11, Lewis[24] points out that Muslim societies could not separate religion and state, admit to a changed place in society for women, or permit the free exchange of ideas, particularly unpleasant ones. He also points out that Western ideas have traveled around the globe, but they have all pretty much stopped at the frontiers of the Arab world, which has shown little interest in other cultures. Thus, there are no great libraries of Western culture or museums of Western art in the Islamic world to match the impressive collections of Muslim culture and art in the West. Ultimately, Lewis argues, the answer to the Muslim world's decline does not lie with American or Western policies, with cultural imperialism or globalism, but rather with the Muslim world itself. Either its societies will continue in "a downward spiral of hate and spite, rage and self-pity, poverty and oppression," with all that implies for a troubled future, or "they can abandon grievance and victimhood, settle their differences, and join their talents, energies and resources in a common, creative endeavor."[25]

The intellectual mentor of "modern" Islamic fundamentalism, Sayyid Qutb (1906-66), lived in the US from 1949 to 1951, and was imprisoned and later executed in Egypt on conspiracy charges. All key members of Al Qaeda have been Egyptians. While at university in Saudi Arabia, Bin Laden was strongly influenced by Abdullah Azzam, a Palestinian preacher in the Qutbist mold, and by Muhammad Qutb, Sayyid's brother, who shared many of the Egyptian martyrs' extremist views. In his writings, Sayyid Qutb eschewed the apparatus of traditional scholarship in his interpretation of *The Koran*. As he wrote in his most influential tract, *Signposts on the Road*, the followers of the Prophet Mohammed did not search for culture and information or for taste and enjoyment in *The Koran*, but rather for instructions as to "what is to be done" in the jihad. Peter Bergen draws attention to the use of "twenty-first century communications and weapons technology in the service of the most extreme, retrograde reading of "holy war," as well as to the "grafting of entirely modern sensibilities and techniques" onto a "pre-modern" religious message.[26] Although radical Islam draws on "pre-

24. Cf. Bernard Lewis, *What Went Wrong? Western Impact and Middle Eastern Response* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002). See also the review by Paul Kennedy, "The Real Culture Wars," in *New York Times Book Review* (Jan. 27, 2002)

25. Salman Rushdie, who has been a victim of Muslim fanaticism for years, agrees with Lewis. See Salman Rushdie, "America and Anti-Americans," an OP-ED in *The New York Times* (Feb. 4, 2002). See also Luciano Pellicani, "Islam and the West," in this issue of *Telos*, which comes to exactly the same conclusions.

26. Cf. Peter L. Bergen, *Holy War, Inc.: Inside the Secret World of Osama Bin Laden* (New York: Free Press, 2001). See the review by Malise Ruthven, "Signposts on the Road: The Nature of al-Qaeda and the parochialism of Western Intelligence," in *Times Literary Supplement* (Dec. 7, 2001).

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modern" readings of *The Koran* and other religious texts, it is wholly modern in its revolutionary existentialism. The first Islamist group to emerge in Egypt after Sayyid Qutb's execution was inspired not just by Islamic writings, but by the "propaganda of the deed" advocated by ultra-leftist radicals such as the Baader-Meinhof gang. This unholy alliance between pre-modern and modern pervades the entire Muslim world, where modernist or accomodationist readings of jihad have been undermined by radical conservatives, many of them funded and supported by Saudi Arabia, which is where most of the Sept. 11 hijackers got their start.

Bin Laden fulminates against "Jews and Crusaders," drawing his supporters from the quintessentially modern, alienated disciples of Sayyid Qutb, who share the Egyptian martyrs' disdain for the materialism and spiritual emptiness of the West and its "pagan" imitators among the ruling Islamic elites. But Bin Laden's targets are *political,* rather than cultural. Al Qaeda is a global conglomerate, with tentacles stretching westward from the Philippines to the US. Its operatives are only loosely connected organizationally, and in this respect it resembles a "multinational holding company, headquartered in Afghanistan, under the chairmanship of Bin Laden." His rage, according to Bergen, is directed primarily against Saudi Arabia, particularly at the presence of infidel American troops on the Arabian peninsula. For all Bin Laden's denunciations of Jews, Al Qaeda has so far never attacked an Israeli target. Only in his last pronouncements from Afghanistan did he mention the Palestian cause, which had never interested him before, obviously to gain sympathy from Arabs and other Muslims. But Bergen overstates the case regarding Saudi Arabia, because Bin Laden had made his anti-Western, particularly anti-American passions and plans clear in print years before gaining prominence in a frontal assault against the US.[27] *The Encyclopedia of the Afghan Jihad,* a multi-volume guide to paramilitary and terrorist activity, written by Bin Laden's followers in the late 1980s and early 1990s, signaled his intention to wage an anti-Western campaign far beyond Afghanistan and Pakistan. The encyclopedia was designed to transfer the knowledge gained from the "first brick of Islamic justice" — the successful war against Soviet communism — to a larger, more important campaign against the West. Since Sept. 11, perhaps too much has been made of Wahabism, the Muslim persuasion favored by Saudi Arabia. Bin Laden's vision of Islam is designed to appeal to the larger Muslim world. His primary target is not the enemy within, i.e., "impious" Muslims, but the enemy without, i.e., the US and the West. The goal is to unify Muslims, not to divide them by doctrine or even by the intensity of their faith. He wants a "clash of civilizations."

Islamic fundamentalism has been growing almost in a vacuum, i.e., within the closed worlds of Iran, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, and Egypt, and the governments in these countries have contributed to it. It began in Egypt and Saudi Arabia, and took advantage of poverty and ignorance to prosper. Certainly, many of its

27. Reuel Marc Gerecht, "The Gospel According to Osama Bin Laden," in *The Atlantic Monthly* (Jan. 2002), pp. 46-48

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followers are disadvantaged and illiterate. But Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Iran, not to mention Iraq, have had plenty of money to alleviate this poverty and ignorance, but instead they wasted it on weapons and luxuries for the ruling elites, until the fanaticism fostered thereby became not only an internal, but also an international problem. Moreover, although these terrorist networks feed on poverty and ignorance, they obviously are not confined to the poor or the uneducated. Osama Bin Laden is a multimillionaire, and the hijackers were all fairly well-educated. The fact remains: ignorant or educated, these militant Muslims cannot be reasoned with, since they are pre-rational, and their fundamentalism is the food of fanaticism. They can only be contained or killed.

Clearly, the perpetrators of the Sept. 11 attacks were not soldiers in the usual sense. They did not wear uniforms, did not carry arms openly, did not display rank, and were not acting at the behest of a sovereign state. Moreover, the Taliban was not a recognized sovereign authority, but merely a faction, and the army of Al Qaeda is a collection of religious fanatics from many countries, however organized they may be. No more than the hijackers and the Taliban can Al Qaeda operatives be considered partisans, for the simple reason that partisans are by nature *telluric*, i.e., bound to the land, and they only fight defensively. Of course, partisans can be terrorists, as they were in Russia during Napoleon's campaign, in the South during the American Civil War, and as they are in the territories now occupied by the Israelis in Palestine. But if terrorists fight offensively and in territories not their own, then they are not partisans. From the standpoint of modern warfare, i.e., the modern laws of war, the hijackers, the Taliban, and Al Qaeda are not only "terrorists," but "criminals." They do not recognize the laws of war, and deliberately target civilians. The hijackers, in particular, did not engage in legitimate combat, but committed suicide and mass murder. Nevertheless, given the new nature of war, all them are "soldiers," although of a different order, and they initiated a war: a "post-modern" war.

How then are these new "soldiers" to be treated? Certainly not as conventional POWs. They are not enemies, but *foes*, and modern terrorists should not be treated according to conventional — modern — international law. The homegrown and international outcry against the treatment of prisoners at Guantanamo Bay is all predicated on outdated assumptions about the customs of conventional warfare. By the same token, the Geneva Conventions are also outdated. According to the third and last Geneva Convention and additional protocols, the armed forces of a party to a conflict must be organized and under a command responsible to that party. They must be subject to an internal system that enforces compliance with the rules of international law. In particular, combatants must distinguish themselves from civilians by a uniform or other distinctive signs recognizable at a distance.[28] Obviously, the prisoners of the Afghan war do not meet

28. Cf. Katherine Q. Seelye, "A P.O.W. Tangle: What the Law Says," in *The New York Times* (Feb. 3, 2002).

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any of these qualifications. Were the US to give these "unlawful combatants" POW status, they would not be required to provide anything more in the way of information than their name, rank, serial number, and date of birth. Of course, most of them have no rank and none of them have a serial number.

The main issue regarding these "unlawful combatants" is that they would not be required to provide any information about past and future attacks and other information that, if obtained in time, may prevent further mass murder of civilians. Another significant factor is that conventional POWs would have to be released after the cessation of hostilities. But, instead of returning to civilian life, these "post-modern" soldiers would immediately go back into the terrorist network. The International Red Cross, has been demanding that these "unlawful combatants" be treated as conventional POWs, be respected for their "convictions," and be granted "personal rights." But, as one reporter has commented, what if these "convictions include the idea that it is good to engage in mass murder of civilians?"[29] As the Geneva Conventions stood during WWII, there was no provision for ICRC delegates to visit concentration camps in which millions of Jews and others died. Only in 1949 were the Geneva Conventions revised to correct this problem. It is time to revise them again, or rather to convene a Fourth Geneva Convention to take into account "post-modern" war and specifically to determine how to treat not only a new enemy, but a *foe* whose goal is extermination rather than a duel.

29. Claudia Rosett, "The Red Cross Needs to Get Real," in *The Wall Street Journal* ((Jan. 23, 2002).

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Review:

The Contingency of Goodness and the Fate of Bulgarian Jews

Tzvetan Todorov, *The Fragility of Goodness: Why Bulgaria's Jews Survived the Holocaust* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001), 197 pp.

In her reflections on the horrendous crimes against European Jews following Hitler's rise to power, Hannah Arendt has shown how evil perpetuates itself in the banality of everyday life, whereas good is fragile and rare. One of these rare cases she mentions is the fate of 50,000 Bulgarian Jews, who were saved from extermination in the death camps during WWII. Arendt confesses that she does not know what to make of all this: "I know of no attempt to explain the conduct of the Bulgarian people, which is unique in the belt of mixed populations."[1]

A number of works have been published on the subject since the early 1960s, when Arendt wrote this. They provide different accounts of those early 1943 events, depending on the author's political inclinations. Thus, not surprisingly, during Todor Zhivkov's communist regime (1954-1989), the Communist Party in general (illegal at the time), and Zhivkov in particular, took credit for the deed. In fact, in the late 1970s, Zhivkov was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize for his presumed role in the rescue.[2] Another, completely different, version has been provided by Bulgarian Jewish emigres, according to which it was King Boris III who protected them from annihilation. During the communist regime, it was very difficult to support either account, since the relevant documents were unavailable and, what is worse, those that were more often than not were distorted and unreliable. Thus, it became common simply to praise the "Bulgarian people" for standing up to the Nazis. Now, Tzvetan Todorov has published many of these documents in his own attempt to explain "this fortunate outcome" (p. 2) by identifying those who deserve credit for the rescue of Bulgarian Jews (p. 12).

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1. Hannah Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil* (New York: Viking Press, 1964), p. 187.

2. Despite the fact that the Communist Party took credit for the rescue of Bulgarian Jews, it never considered it an important event. As Todorov points out, during the "People's Tribunals" in 1944-45, having participated in this rescue was not considered a mitigating circumstance, and the "enemies of the people," i.e., those embroiled with the old regime, were punished indiscriminately. In fact, up to the late 1990s, the rescue was not even mentioned in classes dealing with contemporary history in high schools and universities.

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At the beginning of WWII, Bulgaria had sought to preserve neutrality after having sustained serious losses in the 1912-13 Balkan War and WWI. It turned out to be impossible, in view of the intense pressure from all the warring factions to take sides. The rapidly changing situation in the Balkans resulted in reluctant support of Germany. After all, Romania, Bulgaria's northern neighbor, had joined the Axis, which was already preparing to invade Greece and Yugoslavia. Furthermore, to make the choice more palatable, there were German promises of territorial gains. Thus, in March 1941, Bulgaria joined the Axis. It regained control over the territories it had lost in the Balkan War and WWI (consisting mainly of the Dobrudja region) in September 1940, and regained administrative control over Thrace and Macedonia in April 1941. While the ultimate fate of these lands was to be determined at the end of the war, they formally belonged to Germany, which deprived Jews living in these regions of any civil rights. Yet, despite siding with the Axis, Bulgaria retained military neutrality.

In January 1942, growing pressure from Germany led to the promulgation of the ZZN (Law for the Defense of the Nation), which included a number of repressive measures targeting the Jewish population. In many respects, ZZN was modeled after the Nuremberg Laws of 1935. It limited the right of people of Jewish origin to organize, imposed heavy property taxes on them, established quotas for Jews in certain professions, and banned or limited working in the government, the Army, and financial institutions. A related decree established the KEV (The Commissariat for Jewish Questions), headed by Alexander Belev, a member of Ratnik, one of the three main fascist organizations in Bulgaria. Immediately, KEV mandated that all Jews display the yellow star, forced houses and stores owned by Jews to be designated as such, closed down a number of factories under Jewish ownership, and mobilized Jewish men between 24 and 45 years of age for service in working brigades.

These measures were not applied strictly, and met significant resistance. Todorov provides a number of documents (letters, petitions, speeches, etc.) deploring the new legislation as "shameful," "unconstitutional," and "unjust" from various people and organizations such as the union of writers, the union of lawyers, the Holy Synod, etc. This did not go unnoticed by the Germans. Todorov cites a number of reports to Berlin that led Eichmann to dispatch his relentless aide, SS *Hauptsturmführer* Theodor Dannecker (who was in charge of the deportations from France in 1942)[3] to Sofia. His arrival resulted in a secret agreement with Belev for the deportation of 20,000 Jews (6,000 of whom were to be "leading" Jews). The agreement initially read ". . . 20,000 Jews from the liberated territories (i.e., Thrace and Macedonia)." Aware of the fact that there were no more than 12,000 Jews in these areas, Belev crossed out "from the liberated territories," so that the remaining 8,000 could be deported from Bulgaria proper.[4]

3. Laura Secor, "Sofia's Choice," in *Lingua Franca* (March 2001), p. 36.
4. Stefan Gruev, *Korona ot truni* (Sofia: Bulgarski Pisatel, 1991), p. 389.

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As Arendt emphasizes, in line with their *modus operandi* in the rest of Europe, the Nazis ruled out the possibility to use Jewish leaders for their own purposes — especially in view of the fact that most of them were being protected by the outraged Eastern Orthodox authorities.[5]

Thus, on March 4, 1943, the Jews of Thrace and Macedonia were arrested and within a few days deported to Katowice, Auschwitz, and Treblinka. Of the 11,343, only 12 would survive. This deportation provoked a furor in Bulgaria proper. When arrests began in provincial towns such as Kjustendil, a delegation of local prominent politicians and businessmen immediately set off for Sofia, where they met with Dimitar Peshev, a Kjustendil parliamentary deputy and Vice-Chairman of the National Assembly. The delegation sought to meet with Prime Minister Bogdan Filov, who refused to receive them, but succeeded in meeting with the Minster of Interior, Petar Gabrovski, who at their insistence cancelled the arrests. Peshev went further: he wrote a letter of protest against the government's anti-Jewish measures, signed by 42 deputies from the majority party. Although this letter cost him his position as Vice-Chairman of the National Assembly, the deportation was stopped.[6] In May 1943, under pressure from Dannecker, Belev drafted a new plan for the deportation of Jews to Germany's eastern regions "for reasons of internal security" (p. 11). If this were to prove unfeasible, those living in Sofia were to be banished to the provinces. King Boris III agreed to apply this last measure, and the deportation of Jews from the capital began immediately, again accompanied by protests and demonstrations. A few months later, however, all the deported Jews were allowed to return to their homes in the capital.[7]

According to Todorov, the rescue of the Bulgarian Jews was the result of collective efforts, which succeeded in winning the King's support. Todorov identifies several factors that contributed to the rescue. Most important of all, Bulgarian resistence was ultimately based on a general lack of any anti-Semitism within the population. As Arendt pointed out: "in the belt of mixed populations where anti-Semitism was rampant among all ethnic groups and had become official governmental policy long before Hitler's arrival, the Bulgarians 'had no understanding of the Jewish problem' whatever."[8]

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5. Arendt, *op. cit.*, p. 187. Thus, the Chief Rabbi of Sofia was unavailable, "having been hidden by Metropolitan Stefan of Sofia, who had declared publicly that 'God had determined the Jewish fate, and men had no right to torture Jews, or to persecute them' — which was considerably more than the Vatican had ever done."

6. Similar protests took place in other towns, but, as Todorov notes, they did not succeed as well (p. 10). In Plovdiv, Metropolitan Cyril — the highest regional religious authority — sent a telegram of protest to the King, and allowed a number of Jews to hide in his house. In Sofia, influential people used their connections to aid their Jewish neighbors.

7. As Arendt wrote, "not a single Bulgarian Jew had been deported or had died an unnatural death, when, in August, 1944, with the approach of the Red Army, the anti-Jewish laws were revoked." *Op. cit.*, p. 188.

8. *Ibid.*, p. 185.

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Bulgarian Jews were completely integrated in the population — something that the Germans could not understand (p. 32). In fact, there is considerable evidence that Jews had inhabited the Balkan Peninsula since the 6th century BC, although most of them came after they were expelled from Spain in 1492, which explains why 95% of Bulgarian Jews are Sephardim.[9] Although some knew Ladino (a Judeo-Spanish dialect), they all spoke Bulgarian. While practicing Jews, there were no religious fanatics among them.[10] Unlike other Jews in Central and Western Europe, Bulgarian Jews were never restricted to any particular neighborhood (p. 31). While many of them were small merchants, lawyers, dentists and doctors, they were never kept out of any professions and could be found at all levels of Bulgarian society.[11] They were in the Army,[12] and the 1879 Constitution guaranteed them all civil rights. In 1934, they constituted less than 1% of the Bulgarian population.[13] Given all this, Bulgarian Jews could hardly be seen as a threat to national security. While at the eve of WWII there were a few fascist groups in Bulgaria (primarily the Ratnik, the Brannik, and the Legionnaires), they were small and lacked any popular support or political influence.[14]

Todorov also refers to the "Bulgarian national character" (p. 32) as contributing to the negative reaction against the deportations of Jews. Recently liberated from a five century long Ottoman yoke, Bulgarians lacked any national chauvinism

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9. *Ibid.*, pp. 187-8. In a report, Adolf Beckerle, the German ambassador in Sofia, explained that "the Bulgarians had lived for too long with people like Armenians, Greeks and Gypsies to appreciate the Jewish problem."

10. Yosif Ilel, *Evreite v Bulgaria mezhdu unishtozhenieto i spasenieto: Bulgarskite evrei — faktor v bitkata za sobstvenoto si oceliavane* [Tchast II] (Sofia: Adasa Press, 2000), p. 133.

11. Gruev, *op. cit.*, p. 383. Cf. also Michael Bar-Zohar, *Beyond Hitler's Grasp* (Holbrook, MA: Adams Media Corp, 1998), p. 29: "Only 75 Jews were farmers, and only 24 of them owned land. There wasn't one Jew among the owners of mines, forests, and quarries. . . . There were only 84 industrialists, not even one banker. . . . Out of the 25,000 Jews in Sofia, only 1,422 owned shops, and 723 were merchants whose entire capital consisted of a small crate of cheap goods. . . . In the professions there were also very few Sofia Jews: 58 lawyers, 84 doctors, 25 engineers, 70 dentists. There were no Jews owning or managing newspapers, theaters, or publishing houses. Most of the Jews in Bulgaria, in Sofia in particular, were poor people, living in the poorest neighborhoods — blue collar workers, craftsmen, technicians, workshop employees."

12. Cf. Ilel, *op. cit*, pp.133-147.

13. Todorov cites a 1934 census, according to which there were 48,565 persons of Jewish ethnic origins in Bulgaria. According to Paunovski (Vladimir Paunosvki, *Evreite v Bulgaria mezhdu unishtozhenieto i spasenieto: Antievrejskoto zakonodatelstvo v Bulgaria* (Tchast I), p. 39), they constituted 0.8% of the population. 97% lived in cities. Only 3,877 of them were not Bulgarian citizens.

14. Zygmunt Bauman points out that much of German and Polish anti-Semitism was fueled by recently arrived Eastern Jews, who kept to themselves and antagonized even other well-assimilated Jews. Hardly any of these Jews came to Bulgaria, which consequently did not face the same problems as Germany and Poland. See Zygmunt Bauman, "Exit Visas and Entry Tickets: Paradoxes of Jewish Assimilation," in *Telos* 77 (Fall 1988), pp. 45-77.

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or xenophobia. The ideas of freedom, democracy, and equality were still as fresh as they were immediately after they gained independence. Yet, this was true also of all other neighboring countries, such as Serbia, Greece, Croatia and Romania, where the Jewish communities were systematically exterminated and the local population remained indifferent.[15]

What seems to have made a significant difference in Bulgaria was the particular decisions of key political figures such as Peshev and King Boris III. Along with others before him, Todorov argues that the King's decisions were based purely on political interest (pp. 28, 34), thus considerably diminishing his moral stature. In fact, already in summer 2000 this evaluation had sparked a passionate debate concerning the King's role in the rescue of the Jews when, at the request of the Jewish community in Macedonia, a memorial plaque honoring him, Queen Giovanna, Dimitar Peshev, and Metropolitan Stefan was removed from a forest that had been named after them for what had earlier been deemed heroic deeds. It was replaced by a monument with the names of the 11,343 Jews from Thrace and Macedonia who died in the death camps. Worse yet, the King was called a "fascist"[16] and a "villain"[17] for "agreeing" to the deportations from the occupied territories. According to Todorov, the King had been indifferent (p. 24) until Peshev's intervention. Yet, many times before then King Boris had declined to deport the Jews.[18] Moreover, although Bulgaria had administrative control over Thrace and Macedonia, these territories were formally part of Germany, and the people there were considered citizens of Germany.[19] Under these circumstances, it is unclear whether King Boris had any authority to prevent deportations from the occupied territories. As Beckerle testified at his own trial in 1968, "the king had agreed to the deportation of the Thracian and Macedonian Jews, but had secretly asked for his [Beckerle's] cooperation, so that the deportation of Jews from old Bulgaria might be derailed" (p. 23).

As for Peshev, his role is also morally tainted: initially, he supported the promulgation of the ZZN (although, as it becomes clear from his *Memoirs*,[20] he did not believe the suggested measures would be implemented), was in favor of Bulgaria's joining the Axis, and accepted the banning of all political parties.[21] Yet, the fact remains that, when the chips were down, he led a legal parliamentary action to protect the whole Jewish community, regardless of the political consequences (p. 160).

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15. Arendt, *op. cit.*, pp. 183-193.
16. Iva Rudnikova, "Solomon — na edna plotcha razstoyanie," in *Capital*, July 22, 2000.
17. Secor, *op. cit.*, p. 35.
18. Paunovski, *op. cit.*, pp. 49-51, 55-58.
19. Secor, *op. cit.*, p. 36. People living in these territories, however, were encouraged to acquire Bulgarian citizenship, while Jews were explicitly forbidden from doing so by government decree (p. 5).
20. Todorov has translated the forward to these unpublished *Memoirs* (pp.137-183). Their full text can be found in the Sofia Archives.
21. Secor, *op. cit.*, p. 36.

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Little-known during the communist era, Peshev's name re-emerged in the early 1990s after a number of historical documents became available. His crucial role in the rescue of the Bulgarian Jews is the focus Gabriele Nissim's 1998 biography.[22] As Todorov points out, what characterizes Peshev's efforts is that they succeded. In his petition, he declared the deportation to be "in violation of the Constitution, the ordinary rule of law, common decency and basic human sympathy, [and] could not be implemented and, from a legal standpoint, was null and void" (p. 30). Indeed, ultimately the reasons mentioned for opposing the anti-Jewish policy in the petition had to do *prima facie* with the protection of Bulgaria's political interest. According to Todorov, *Realpolitik* was placed before moral principles, because "this was an eminently political situation."[23] Yet, a close reading of the documents makes it obvious that, as in the case of King Boris (who was poisoned before he could write any *Memoirs*), the motivation had to do, first and foremost, with principles of morality and duty, rather than *Realpolitik*.

Without the efforts of Peshev[24] and King Boris, Bulgaria would have been remembered as a country where the people, the Church, and various organizations stood against the anti-Jewish measures and the deportations, but all in vain. The petitions would have fallen on deaf ears, were it not for the actions of those two figures, who had the power, the wisdom, and the moral vision to change government policy. As Nissim emphasizes: "It is important to make a distinction between those who act in power and those who act outside of it."[25] Despite all his efforts to provide an objective narrative, in presenting the rescue of the Bulgarian Jews from annihilation simply as the result of the fortuitous interaction of different factors and actors, Todorov ends up vaporizing personal responsibility and moral choice into a subject-less postmodernism, where events almost determine themselves and impose an inescapable logic on helpless political actors. Thus, morality seems to fade within an indeterminate historical horizon, where it is ultimately irrelevant whether the Jews were saved or exterminated.

As already indicated,[26] Arendt also sees the rescue of the Bulgarian Jews from annihilation as an inexplicably unique historical event. But, this claim to uniqueness is questionable. In fact, even if not on the same scale as the rescue of

22. Gabriele Nissim, *L'Uomo che fermò Hitler: La storia di Dimitar Peshev che salvò gli ebrei di una naziona intera* (Milan: Mondadori, 1998).

23. Secor, *op. cit.*, p. 39.

24. At the People's Tribunals in 1944-5, Peshev was sentenced to 15 years in prison as "an enemy of the people," which is to a large extent why he was erased from history during the communist regime (pp. 14-6). The whole story, however, is now relatively well known — so much so that, in the "Frances Boyer Lecture" he delivered February 13, 2001 at the American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research, Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas took the time to recount the whole story as an example of integrity and courage. See the whole speech on www.peshev.org.

25. Quoted in Secor, *op. cit.*, p. 39.

26. Arendt, *op. cit.*, p. 188.

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Bulgarian Jews, there is at least one important precedent in recent Bulgarian history. During the genocide of Armenians by the Ottoman Turks decades earlier, the Bulgarians did not remain indifferent. According to a number of accounts, many people sheltered fleeing Armenians in their homes, thus saving their lives. In recognition, today the Armenians celebrate a day of thanksgiving in honor of those Bulgarians who had gone out of their way to save some of their forebears.[27]

In some sense, all historical events are unique. Yet, as Zygmunt Bauman has pointed out, branding even epoch-defining catastrophes such as the Holocaust as unique reduces and misjudges their significance by placing them in a singular category.[28] This uniqueness also makes it difficult to deploy standard moral criteria for evaluating the behavior of those entrusted with making decisions, since such a deployment would tend to undermine the event's unique character by subsuming it as a particular instance of general categories of moral judgment. Usually, moral decisions have an impact limited to the person who makes them or to relatively small social milieus within which they are made. When these decisions are made by responsible people who happen to be in positions of power, however, they become immensely more important in terms of their social and political consequences. They are also more easily reducible to pragmatic calculations that tend to dissipate their moral import. Despite his laudable efforts to make sense out of an extremely complex historical event, Todorov ultimately takes this easy way out. In the process, he may well have been unfair to both Peshev and King Boris.

Julia Kostova

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27. Oppressed by the Turks for centuries, it would have been inconceivable for Bulgarians to have behaved differently, as they could have in the case of the deportation of Bulgarian Jews. This, however, does not make the actions in question any less morally praiseworthy. The Bulgarians' particular relation of enmity with the Turks may also help explain examples of Bulgarian indifference in the face of other expressions of "ethnic cleansing." Thus, in the mid-1980s, when Bulgaria's communist government under Zhivkov decided to expel the Turks, no one stood up for the thousands that left the country, as if going to a vacation (as the government maintained), carrying TV sets, microwaves etc.

28. Zygmunt Bauman, "Sociology after the Holocaust," in *The Bauman Reader*, ed. by Peter Beilharz (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2001), pp. 230-231. In the late 1980s, the question concerning the uniqueness of the Holocaust created a major controversy in Germany in what came to be known as the *Historikerstreit*. What was at stake, more than the abstract question concerning the "uniqueness" of the Holocaust, was the attempt by some German historians to "normalize" German history, thus occluding the magnitude of Nazi crimes and reducing them to run-of-the-mill political accidents. In other words, when all was said and done, the Germans had not done anything out of the ordinary, and life could resume as if nothing had really happened. While the outrage expressed by critics such as Jürgen Habermas is understandable in view of the German historians' hidden political agenda, the philosophical arguments remain questionable. See the special issue of *New German Critique* 44 (Spring/Summer 1988), devoted entirely to the *Historikerstreit*; especially Habermas' contribution, "A Kind of Settlement of Damages (Apologetic Tendencies)," pp. 25-39.

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